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"WHAT DID YOU DO THAT FOR? I HAVE A NOTION TO PASTE YOU!" SHOUTED
TRAIN-BOY TRIST.

TRAIN-BOY TRIST'S Hot Hustle;

OR,

Bouncing the Broadway Crook.

BY J. C. COWDRICK,

'AUTHOR "BROADWAY BILLY" NOVELS, ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE "SCRAP" ON THE TRAIN.

A THROUGH Express on the Pennsylvania Railroad was bowling rapidly along toward New York.

The conductor entered the smoking-car and carefully scanned the passengers there, as if in search of some particular individual.

In a moment he sighted the person wanted and, advancing straight to him, touched him

upon the shoulder, causing the passenger to look up quickly, when, seeing who it was, the man fumbled for his ticket.

He was a young man, maybe twenty-eight years of age, good-looking and well dressed. He wore a high hat, a fine, black coat, light trousers, and sported a diamond upon his necktie. He looked the polished gentleman, from top to toe, yet the practiced eye could have told at a glance that it was only veneer.

"I don't want your ticket," said the conductor, in a low tone, "but I'll take that pocketbook, if you please."

The fellow's face paled, slightly, but he quickly summoned all the nerve and effrontery he could command, assuming a manner of greatest indignation.

"Sirrah! what do you mean?" he cried.

"I know you, and you know well enough what I mean," answered the conductor, coolly. "Give me the pocketbook you took from that young woman back there in the other car—quick!"

The fellow's exclamation had drawn the attention of the passengers, and nearly every one of those further forward had turned in their seats. One, a youth of eighteen, perhaps, in the far end of the car, had sprung to his feet and was moving down the aisle.

"Take that!" the well-dressed villain cried, as, leaping up, he dealt the conductor a blow in the face that dropped him to the floor like a log, while the slung-shot scoundrel had used disappeared up his sleeve before it could be seen by any one.

Many of the passengers were upon their feet instantly; but, quicker than the rest, was the youth. Two or three bounds and he was face to face with the rascal who had struck the cowardly blow.

The conductor was lying as still as if dead, and blood was running from a spot near one of his temples, where the slung shot had done its dreadful work.

"You infernal blackleg in broadcloth!" cried the youth, boiling over with indignation, shaking his fist in the fellow's face. "What did you do that for? I have a notion to paste you!"

"Better have a care how you meddle," warned the polished scamp. "I struck him because he insulted me, and I would do it again, under the same provocation. He said something that reflected upon my good character. I'm sorry that my ring cut him, though."

"Your ring!" cried the youth, disdainfully. "It was a slug, that's what it was!"

"Keep away from me, young man, or I will harm you. I am not accountable to you, I guess. If the man had not insulted me I would not have struck him. Keep off, I tell you!"

"You have not only struck him, but maybe killed him. Men, help me to capture this fellow," appealing to the rest of the passengers. "John Lynch was my friend, and even if he wasn't I would take a hand in this scrap just the same. You can't get away from Trist Finley, you coward!"

The rascal was trying to back away, making his excuses as he did so, but the determined youth kept close to him.

It was quite probable that the man was afraid to use the "slug" a second time.

Some of the passengers made a move to respond to the younger man's call.

Unquestionably the rascal would have been placed under arrest, but, just at the critical moment something happened.

There was a shock; all who were upon their feet were sent violently headlong in a forward direction, at the sudden slackening of the speed of the train, a succession of jerks and bumps followed, until the train soon came to a stop.

Among the first to recover was the youth, who immediately looked around to find the man he was determined to detain, but was just in time to see him crawling out at the door.

"Hold on there!" he shouted. "Don't you think you are goin' to get away, for you ain't."

He tried to get at him, but the other passengers, all more or less frightened out of their senses, got in his way, and the fellow made good his escape.

When, finally, the youth did reach the door, the man was nowhere to be seen, and in the darkness it was as good as useless to look further for him. Besides, there was something else to do.

Trist Finley, as we have learned the youth's name to be, was a newsboy in the employ of the Union News Company. He was popularly known as Train-boy Trist, and was a special, or extra. He could take any run, anywhere, at short notice, and was just now on his way home after doing such service.

Finding it useless to look further for his "blackleg in broadcloth," he turned back into the car to give attention to the conductor.

Some of the passengers had lifted him up, and he was just coming to.

Trist stooped to pick up his cap, where it was lying on the carpet of the aisle, and as he did so a paper under one of the seats caught his eye.

This was the seat the well-dressed rascal had occupied, and the thought came to Trist immediately on seeing the paper that it was something that had been dropped by him. Nor was he mistaken.

That paper, in his hands, was destined to play an important part.

CHAPTER II.

TRIST GETS A STARTER.

THE place where the sudden stop had been made was Amboy Junction.

It was no accident, but a narrow escape from such. There was a freight train in the act of "crossing over," and there had been a delay in displaying the proper signals.

When the signals were first seen by the engineer of the Express he was only a short distance from them, and it required the promptest kind of action to bring his train to a halt. There was no time to stop gradually; it had to be done at once.

But it was only a brief delay; barely sooner had the halt been made than the whistle sounded and one of the trainmen came through in quest of the conductor.

Train-boy Trist had just risen from picking up the conductor's cap.

He had shoved the paper into his pocket.

"What's the matter?" the trainman asked, excitedly, seeing the blood on the conductor's face. "Did his head strike a seat?"

"No, he got a swat before the shock came," answered Trist. "A dude in broadcloth hit him with a slug, and I would have had the feller, if it hadn't been for the sudden stand-up."

"What did he hit 'im for? Wish I'd seen him do it!"

"That's the puzzle of it; I don't know what it was for," said Trist. "But, John, will be able to tell us soon's he pulls together."

The conductor had now been placed in one of the seats, and one of the passengers was examining his wound with something of the air of a man who knew what he was about.

He shook his head.

"Is it bad?" inquired the trainman.

"Where does he live?" the man asked, instead of answering.

"He lives at Rahway."

"Ha! that is excellent. He must be put off there and taken home. He is dangerously hurt."

"Are you a doctor, sir?"

"Yes."

"That settles it. I'll signal the engineer to stop there, and we'll put him off and I'll report to headquarters. Trist, will you stay by him and help in gettin' him home?"

"That's what I will," Train-boy Trist answered.

The trainman hurried out, and Trist assisted the doctor in bandaging the conductor's head as well as it could be done temporarily.

The conductor appeared to be partly conscious, opening his eyes now and then, but made no effort to move his head from where the doctor placed it when he had finished the bandaging.

By that time the train rolled into Rahway and stopped.

The trainmen and Trist carried the injured man out and gently placed him in a carriage, and Trist and a man employed around the station went home with him.

Meantime a doctor had been summoned by telephone from the station, and by the time the carriage reached the house the doctor was on hand there to take charge of the case.

It was an hour later before the conductor came to.

His wife and Trist were the only ones in the room at the time, the doctor having taken leave.

The conductor suddenly raised himself up on his elbow and asked:

"Is the train in all right?"

"Don't you worry your head about the train," said Trist. "The train is all right, and so are you."

"Ha! is it you, Trist? And you, Mary?" as the wife gently pressed him down upon the pillow. "Now I remember; that toney sneak struck me, didn't he?"

"You bet he did!" cried Trist. "And I'm dyin' to know what he done it for. He hit you a swat with a slug that almost fixed you out, I'm tellin' ye. What did he hit ye for?"

"Because I got on to him, and he was afraid I would give him away or have him arrested. He stole a pocketbook from a young woman in one of the passenger cars, and I went for him and demanded it back again. He pretended innocent, and that's about all I remember."

"The sneak! I would 'a' had him, but just 'bout that time Gordon slapped on the air and brought us all up standin' and stood us on our heads or the next thing to it, and he got away."

"What happened?"

Trist explained briefly, and quickly returned to the subject in which he had more interest.

"Did you know the feller?" he asked.

"Yes," answered the conductor. "His name is Jason Gorman, and he is a Broadway crook of the first water."

"I'll crook him, if I can get onto him for this crack he gave, you, John. I hope I kin find him. But, what about the girl?"

"I don't know, poor child. She was cryin', and asked me to help her find her pocketbook. She thought she had lost it on the floor, but I knew better than that at once."

"How did you get onto Gorman?"

"Why, I saw him talking with her, between Philadelphia and Trenton and I took her then for an ally of his and paid no further attention at the time; but when she told me of her loss, then I saw she was his victim instead, and I went for him at once."

"What did you find out about the girl?"

"Mighty little. She said that she was traveling alone, and that she was on her way to New York. All the money she had was in her pocketbook, and some valuable papers. She seemed to care more for the papers than for the money. Funniest part of it, she let fall the fact that she had run away from home."

"It begins to git interestin', don't it, Mrs. Lynch?"

"Yes, it certainly does," the conductor's wife agreed.

"You didn't learn her name, did you?" Trist next asked.

"Yes, I did; she said her name was stamped in her pocketbook—Sarah Sweetapple."

"I'll bet she was a rosy gal, with a name like that," laughing.

"She was a fine looking girl," the conductor declared, "as fresh as a flower, and about twenty years old at a guess."

"And no tellin' what's become of her, now, reachin' New York without friends or money. Hang me if I wouldn't like to take a hand in this game, John, and see that she pulls through all right."

"It wouldn't be the first piece of detective work you have done, Trist."

"That's so; but, here is no clue, and I am all at sea. Besides, she is in New York while I am away out here. Guess I'll have to give it up."

"But, I'm afraid Jason Gorman will work her some injury, if he has got her papers and they are of any value. The case ought to be put in the hands of the police, and you can do that."

"That's so, sure enough; and I have said I'd get one in on him for this swat he gave you. I'll do it; there's just time to get the next train to New York. If we only knewed where Gorman hangs out, then it wouldn't be such trouble to get at him, maybe."

"All you have got to do is to tell Byrnes, and his men will hunt him out."

"Yes, they are lightnin', no mistake, when they want to be."

Trist had sprung to his feet, ready to leave the house, with a glance at his watch.

He thrust his hand into his pocket for a time-table, and in pulling it out a piece of paper came with it and dropped to the floor.

Mrs. Lynch picked it up.

"Here, you dropped something," she said, handing it to him.

Trist took it, but it required a second glance to recognize what it was, and he exclaimed:

"Ha! now I remember. This may give me a pointer."

It was the paper he had picked up under the seat in the smoking-car, when he stooped to get Lynch's cap.

"What is it?" the conductor asked.

Trist explained while he opened the paper and held it up to the light.

It was a half-sheet of note paper, and it had been very closely folded, as if to put in a small space.

"This puts me onto it!" the news-special exclaimed, as soon as he had read it. "Now I've got a clew, and you see if I don't make things hum! Just listen to this:

"NEW YORK, Oct. 15th, '94.

"SARAH:—

"Here is the money, sent as you desired. If what you say is true, and you are determined to leave, come straight to my house. You will be of age the 20th of November, and I will then aid you to get possession of the fortune. Do not fail to bring the papers.

"SAMUEL RUSHKIN,
No. — Amsterdam Ave., N. Y."

CHAPTER III.

SOME FACTS ABOUT THE CASE.

"What do you think of that?" Train-boy Trist demanded, as soon as he had read the letter aloud.

"I think it is enough to put a fellow like Jason Gorman, the Broadway Crook, up to a scheme to get a finger in that fortune, if he can," said the injured conductor, "and it is for you to block his game, Trist."

"And I'll do it, too, if it is in the wood, you bet!" the youth exclaimed, in determined tone. "This gives me a starter, anyhow, and if I don't make it lively for Jason Gor-

man it will be 'cause I can't do it, that's all. And I'll get in an extra lick for you, John."

A few words more, and Trist left the house and made all haste to the railroad station.

He was none too soon to catch the train to the city.

His pass was good on any train, and on his way in he was required to tell all about what had happened on the Express, to eager listeners.

Trist did not disclose the whole matter, however, thinking it just as well not to do so, since he meant to try a little detective work upon the case himself, to see what he could do with it.

As soon as he reached New York he set out for Amsterdam avenue, late as it was.

He knew the young woman had had more than ample time to reach her destination, and that if not there it was quite likely something had happened.

Reaching the desired neighborhood, he was not long in finding the number he wanted, and made no hesitation about pulling the bell.

The house was dark from bottom to top.

Presently a window was heard to rise, and a sleepy voice called out:

"Who is there?"

"Is that Mr. Rushkin?" asked Trist.

"Yes," the response. "Who are you, and what do you want?"

"I want to see you, sir, on a matter of importance—something that you would not want me to shout."

"Who are you?"

"I'm a messenger, sir."

"All right; be down in a minute."

Trist waited, and presently a light appeared in the hall and the door was unlocked.

The news company's special found himself face to face with a fierce-looking man about fifty years old, with a bald head and portly paunch.

The man looked at him keenly.

"Say, has Sarah Sweetapple got here all right?" Trist made haste to ask.

Mr. Rushkin gave a great start.

"No, she isn't here," he answered. "What do you know about Sarah Sweetapple, anyhow?"

"I don't know as much about her as I want to, that's sure," was the rejoinder, "for I'm afraid that something has happened to her. She was on the train to-night from Philadelphia."

The man was now alive with interest and somewhat excited.

"Come inside," he said hurriedly. "Tell me all about this, and just what you know about it."

Trist stepped into the hall and the man closed the door.

"I don't know much about it," he declared. "I only know that she was on the train, and that she fell in company with a blackleg crook who robbed her of her pocket-book and papers—"

"Good heavens!"

"That's what I say, too, Mr. Rushkin, and the sooner we get a move on us to find the young lady, the better for her health."

"Yes, yes, but how did you know that I live here, and that I'm her uncle? I am puzzled to know that. Did you get acquainted with the young lady on the train, in some way?"

"Have never seen her in my life," answered Trist. "Wouldn't know her if I fell over her. As to knowin' you was her uncle, I didn't."

The man looked at him in a state of bewilderment.

"This is how I knowed where you live," Trist added, showing the letter he had found.

Mr. Rushkin grabbed it eagerly.

"Yes, yes, it is the note I wrote to her," he cried. "Goodness me! but something

must be done, and that at once, or she'll be lost. I will go straight to the police."

"Yes, that is what you had better do," agreed Trist. "Maybe they can do something, and meantime I'll be hustling to see what I kin do."

"But, where did you get this?"

"Oh, yes, I must tell you that. I found it on the floor where the fellow sat who robbed her of her pocketbook, and this must 'a' dropped out of it when he was lookin' over its contents."

"And who was the rascal?"

"Yes, you must tell the police that, sure. His name is Jason Gorman, and he is an out-and-out crook."

Trist then told the whole story, as briefly as possible, to which Mr. Rushkin listened with intense interest, and as soon as he concluded Trist asked:

"Now what can you tell me about the young lady?"

"What do you want to know?"

"Anything that will be of use to me in finding her, or in balking that fellow Gorman from cheating her out of her rights."

"Well, she is my niece, my dead sister's child. Her mother died when she was very young, and her father gave her into the keeping of his sister to bring up, as he trusted her more than me. He died a few years later."

"I have kept an eye on her in a quiet way, though, all these years, and once when I seen her I told her, privately that if she ever needed a friend she mustn't forget her Uncle Sam. And she didn't. Not a great while ago I got a letter from her, showin' that she was in a peck of trouble."

"It seems her aunt and uncle on that side, Skinner by name, have got a only son just turned of age, and they was bent and determined that Sarah should marry him whether or no, and she objected. It was only to get their clutches onto the girl's fortune, you see, for she soon comes of age and then she will come into quite a snug sum that's awaitin' her."

"She wrote to me, tellin' me all about it, and sayin' that she wasn't allowed any company but Tom Skinner's, and she didn't have a penny of money, for fear she would write to me or run away. And she wanted me to send her money so that she could run away and come to me, tellin' me to send the letter in name of Sarah C. Smith, and she would get it at the post-office herself. And that's what I done, as you see by this."

"Bully fer you!" exclaimed Train-boy Trist. "You are the kind of a man to couple up to, every time. It is for you and me to roll up our sleeves and go into this thing, and if we can't knock some spots off of Jason Gorman and his scheme it will be funny. Give me your fin, uncle!"

Trist grabbed the old man's hand whether he would or not, and gave it a hearty shake.

"And what are you going to do now?" the old man asked.

"I am going straight back to the station in Jersey City, and take a start from there and see if I can get on track of your niece, or of Gorman, Broadway Crook, either one. I only wish I knowed what she looks like—"

"Hold on, I have got a pictur' of her upstairs."

"That's jest the cheese."

"It's a couple of years old, but I reckon it will look enough like her now to be of some use."

"Yes, an' it will beat no picture all holier. I kin add a couple of years in my mind and 'magine how she orter look now, you see. Trot it out, Uncle Sam, and then we'll get down to business."

The man hurried up the stairs, where Trist heard him talking earnestly with a woman for some minutes, and then back he came with a picture in his hand.

"There she is!" he said. "Take a good look at her and fix her face in your mind,

and if you can bring her to us safe and sound I'll give you twenty dollars, spot cash as a reward."

Trist looked at the likeness searchingly.

It was that of a splendid-looking young woman, and he fixed the features well in his mind.

"All right, uncle," he said; then, "I'm going for that sawbuck, you bet! I will remove my shadder, now, and you get a tall hustle onto you and give the facts to the police. If we don't kick up a rumpus that will make somebody sick then I miss my guess, that's all."

With that Trist took leave, hastening back to the ferry.

CHAPTER IV.

STRIKING THE TRAIL.

It would be quite useless, he knew, for him to make any inquiries on the New York side of the river.

The passengers pour in and out, and no one is personally noticed by the employees stationed there.

Of course, it is the same on the other side, with the difference that there are more employees, and there the baggage is looked after.

There, too, Trist was well known, and he believed that he might fall in with some one who had noticed the young lady. Anyhow his chances there were better.

It was past midnight when he reached the great station.

He entered, looked around for some familiar face, and the first one he encountered was that of one of the gatemen.

"Hello, Ben!" he greeted.

"That you, Trist? How are you?"

"Able to sit up, thank you. Say, was you here when the Express arrived?"

"You bet."

"Take any notice of the passengers?"

"No more'n to see 'em makin' a line for the ferry-boat. Why?"

"You are of no use to me, then. I'll have to find some-body else. Want to get on track of a certain passenger?"

He passed through the doors and out into the shed, where a late train was about starting, and employees were running to and fro upon one errand or another.

Another train was expected in at the same time, and the baggagemen were getting their trucks in order for the reception of whatever baggage there might be to handle.

Near the gates opposite to the track upon which the train was looked for, was a baggage-express runner, with book and pencil in hand.

Trist knew him well.

"How do, Mick!" he accosted.

"Hello, Trist," the response. "How you was?"

"Did you meet the Express when it came in, Mick?" designating which one.

"Yes, I was here; why?"

"See anything of a nice-lookin' young lady that seemed to be in a bushel of trouble about somethin'?"

"That's what I did; seen her talkin' to Baby McKee."

"Where did she go?"

"Don't know. Find Baby, and maybe he can tell you more about her."

"All right; that's what I'll have to do, for I want to get on track of that pretty damsel, you bet!"

"Crooked?"

"Not a bit, but there is a crook after her, and if I don't put a spoke in his wheel it will be 'cause I can't spell Abel with a big A."

With a wave of the hand, then, Train-boy Trist was off in quest of Baby McKee, who, by the way, was not the original of that name, but a messenger-boy who had been so dubbed.

Trist went out and around to the stairs

that led up to the domain of the dispatchers, and reaching the dispatchers' room, entered.

"Know where Baby McKee is?" he asked.

"Guess you'll find him in the 'phone box."

Trist pushed right on, knowing the place meant, and came to the closet where the telephone switches were.

And, there was "Baby."

"Hello, Baby!" Trist greeted. "I have come to see you."

"All right, Trist; just wait till I give this feller some guff."

The boy was busy with the plugs, trying to put somebody in communication with somebody else, and finally he got things adjusted satisfactorily.

"There," he said, "now you can see me all you want to, Trist, till somebody else rings me down. I wish I was a girl, whenever they put me in this coffin to 'tend the plugs."

"Why, how's that, Baby?" inquired Trist.

"'Cause, then the men would be polite. I know how it goes. It would be—Yes, dear, and—No, dear; and you could almost taste honey while you listened. But, soon as a boy is at the plugs, then it's—Hustle, you darn monkey, and buckle on that connection!"

Trist had to laugh at the boy's earnestness, but got immediately down to business.

"I wanted to see you about that young woman that came in on the Express, and spoke to you," he said. "Who was she?"

"Wasn't she jest the daisy dame, though?" said Baby. "It's my beauty that draws 'em to me, Trist. Now, if you was only good-lookin' like I am, you might stand some show—"

"Oh! dry up!" cried Trist. "I'm not foolin'. There is a Broadway crook after that young lady, and I'm on the trail to dump his apple-cart."

"Ha! is that so? Then, he's the chappie that spoke to her, I bet!"

"Somebody spoke to her? When?"

"Just after she left me and was goin' to the boat."

"What sort o' lookin' fellow was he, Baby? Maybe he was the very customer I am after."

"Rather good-lookin' man, with a plug hat, flash pin, and light trowsers. I took him fer a millionaire, or a counter-jumper, or somethin' like that."

"The very fellow!" averred Trist. "That was Jason Gorman, Baby, one of the biggest Broadway crooks in New York—if that is where he lives, which I don't know fer a fact. I want to know, though."

"Then he was the feller what hit John Lynch!"

"The same fellow."

"Why didn't I know that? If I wouldn't had him run in double-quick my name ain't Sam!"

"But, about the young woman, Baby: what did she say to you?"

"She wanted to know which ferry would take her nearest to Amsterdam avenue, in New York."

"And what did you tell her?"

"I told her it didn't make much difference, for she would have to take the cars anyhow, and if it was me I'd take the Cortlandt."

"What did she say to that?"

"Why, she said she was going to walk, and that was the reason she wanted to know the nearest way; and then I told her to take the Desbrosses. Don't see what in the name of Tut'l Frutti she wanted to walk for."

"Because she had no money to ride, Sam, that's the reason."

"No mon?"

"Not a cent; that fellow Gorman had robbed her."

"Why didn't I know that? I would 'a' give her the price, on her good looks."

"And that was all she said to you?"

"That's all."

"And you don't know which boat she really did take?"

"No, but I think she meant to take the Desbrosses, as I told her; but she went with that fellow."

"Just what I expected. He must have jumped on the rear end of the train and come right in with it, maybe puttin' on a disguise to do so, after hittin' Lynch the way he did."

"That must 'a' been it."

"Well, that is about all you can tell me, I guess, Baby, and there is a ring for you, so I'll slide. Ta-ta!"

With that, Trist playfully blew a kiss to the messenger-boy, and withdrew and hastened away, to puzzle his brain as to how he was going to follow the trail further.

He had made some progress, now, that was certain, but there it seemed to end as suddenly as if he had run up against a dead wall. And the worst of it, there appeared to be no outlet anywhere.

"I'm afraid I'm stuck," he said to himself. "Gorman has got her in New York, and they are just as much lost there as if they had gone and jumped into the Atlantic Ocean, almost. Don't see any way to follow the trail any further, now. But, that was the way it looked once on the Jones case."

Trist recalled another case on which he had done a clever bit of detective work.

"It is dollars to cents that they took the Desbrosses Ferry," he reasoned, "for Gorman would naturally follow the young lady till he got a cinch on her and could make her follow him, and that was the way she would be likely to go, after askin' Baby about it. That's the only chance I see, and I'll go and do likewise and see if I can pick up the trail on the other side."

Accordingly, he went on board the Desbrosses ferry-boat.

CHAPTER V.

STILL ON THE TRACK.

He looked at his watch as the boat started.

His idea was to figure and see if this could have been the boat that had met the Express; but, that was not easy to do, for now the boats were running at longer intervals, and it would require more of a mathematician than he to figure it out.

There was an easier way.

Going out on the deck he fell in with one of the deck hands, and put the question to him.

No, this was not the boat; it had been on the other side about the time of the arrival of the Express. So, Train-boy Trist was blocked, so far as getting any information there.

He kept up a lively thinking all the way across, and had drawn some deductions by the time he reached the other side.

If Gorman had won the young woman's confidence, he reasoned, the chances were that he had taken her away in a cab.

The hour was late, and it might not have required much argument to convince the girl that that would be by far the better plan for her to go to her uncle's.

The rascal might or might not have gone with her, but once in the cab she was in his power and he was smart enough to carry out his scheme as he saw fit.

Trist believed he had hit the mark.

Going off the boat and out of the house, he stopped and looked around.

Presently he saw a policeman loitering near, and after the passengers had rushed past, Trist stepped up and spoke to him.

"How long have you been on duty here to-night?" he asked.

"What do you want to know that for?" the counter-question.

Trist was not acquainted with the officer.

"Because, I want to get some information, if you were here about eleven o'clock."

"Well, I was."

"Did you pay any attention to the passengers that came off the boat?"

"A little, about the same as usual. But, what are you driving at, and who are you, anyhow?"

"My name is Trist Finley, and I work for the News Company. Just now I am playing detective, and I'm after one of the worst crooks in ten towns the size of New York."

This explanation awakened the officer's interest.

"Who is the crook you mean?" he asked.

"Jason Gorman."

"And what has he been up to?"

"He is trying to work roots to cheat a young woman of fortune."

"What kind of looking fellow is he?"

Trist described him the best he could, concluding:

"There you have him, and now the present question is—have you seen him?"

"I think I have," was the response. "Can you describe the young woman, too? Then I'll know."

"I can't describe her very well, only to say that she's about twenty years old and mighty good-lookin'. She has a full face, large eyes, and lips that look like they want to be kissed."

"Same one, then. I can put you on track of 'em, young fellow."

"Bully!"

"They got into a cab here, and the young man seemed to be her husband, as I thought. There is the same cab, right over there, and Shorty McShane is the driver. That's him."

"Heap o' thanks to you," cried Trist.

"You will be a captain some day, see if you ain't! If I come out on top in this game, I'll set up the cigars for you, sure pop. And I'm comin' out on top, or I won't come out at all," he added to himself, "for I'm goin' in to win."

The officer having pointed out the cab and its driver, Trist needed no further help in that direction.

The fellow designated as Shorty was a short, thickset fellow with a red face and redder hair, and he seemed to be about giving up his post for the night.

"Hello, Shorty?" exclaimed Trist, approaching him.

The cabbie looked at him from head to feet, and responded:

"Well, I'll say hello, ter be perlite, but I be hanged if I know ye."

"Don't you know Trist Finley?"

"Guess not."

"Well, it's time you did, then, that's all," and Trist smiled in his hearty manner.

"Let me make myself acquainted."

"Seems to me you are a purty fresh jigger," remarked Shorty, coldly.

"Have to be, in these days of git up and git. I reckon you don't fold your arms and say nothin' when there is a rush of passengers comin' off, do ye? I am the same way."

"Well, what do you want with me?"

"There; that's business. I have found a paper that belonged to that last passenger you had, and I want to take it to her, if you will tell me where you left her."

The cabbie looked at Trist searchingly.

"Are you dealin' in good goods?" he asked.

"You bet; my goods are straight, and not a tinge of green about 'em anywhere. Here is the badge I wear when I'm on duty."

He displayed his news-company cap badge.

"You are a newsboy, then?"

"That's it."

"Well, how did you know that I took a woman away from the ferry?"

"I mean the young, good-lookin' woman, who went off with that well-dressed chap. How do you suppose I would know, if I hadn't been here, and didn't see 'em get into your cab?"

"Well, that's so; any fool would have knowed you couldn't know it any other way."

"And where did you take 'em to?"

"Corner of Grand and Bowery."

"Whew!" whistled Trist. "Guess they are past findin', then, if that is the case. Was in hopes you had taken 'em to some house."

"No; that's where they got out, and the man paid the fare like a gentleman, too. Say, what do you know about 'em?"

"Not much; what do you know?"

"I thought first the gal was his bride, but I found out different."

"How did you find out?"

"When they got out she said she was sorry he had to pay, but said her uncle would make that all right, and he said somethin' about it's bein' a pleasure to him to serve her."

Trist felt like slapping the cabbie on the back and exclaiming "Good boy!"

Here was proof that he was on the right track.

"Then it seems she was dead broke, eh?" he remarked. "That was too bad."

"Yes, and that ain't all of it, either."

"What else?"

"Why, I heard her ask him if Grand street was Amsterdam avenue. That struck me as bein' rather strange."

"Didn't it strike you that that feller was a Broadway crook, and that he was givin' her a wild steer?" asked Trist. "That's jest what he was, and jest what he was doin', too."

"Well, now, I sort o' s'picioned that, after I had left 'em."

"And, now, it will be impossible to find 'em, of course."

"It won't be easy, that I'll bet."

"One thing: they must be in that neighborhood, or the fellow wouldn't had you take 'em there."

"That stands to reason."

"And, he couldn't walk the young lady very far after leaving the cab, or she would take alarm."

"That's so, too."

"And, it ain't the most respectable neighborhood in the world, that's the worst of it. Wish I knew the house he was heading for, then I'd be all hunk."

"And I wish I could give it to you, too, but I can't."

"It ain't only for the paper I want to find her, but to get her out of that sharper's clutches and restore her to her uncle. There is going to be trouble before long, you bet—big trouble, too."

"Well, I am sorry for the gal, and wish you luck."

"You could help me, if you are inclined, now that you know everything wasn't right."

"All right; I'll do it, if it is anything that's reasonable, for I am straight goods myself and I hate anybody that ain't. That feller worked me pretty nice, I must say fer him."

CHAPTER VI.

TRIST TRIES ONCE MORE.

THE cabbie put out his hand for a shake. Trist took it readily enough, and their friendship was begun.

"This is your chance to get in a dig at him in return," said Trist. "He is the worst crook in New York."

"He paid me like a gent, though. But, that's nothin' to do with it, for he had to do that, for I'd 'a' stove in his shiner if he hadn't, you bet. But, what am I ter do?"

"First, hustle me to Police Headquarters."

"What fer?"

"To report the case, of course; what d'ye s'pose? Then we'll go to the place where you left 'em."

"All right, I'll do it."

"No charge, you know."

"Course not; didn't I offer?"

"Yes; but the book says—Arrange with your cabbie before you get into his trap, you know."

They both laughed at that.

"I was goin' home anyhow, and it won't take me much longer," the cabman said. "I am not goin' to take you inside, though, but on the seat with me."

"And I wasn't goin' to ride inside, anyhow, so we are both suited," rejoined Trist. "Whip up your bunch o' bones, now, and we're off. To Police Headquarters the first place."

So they started, and chatted away like old acquaintances, until, arriving at his first destination, Trist sprung down and entered.

He asked immediately for the captain in charge.

There was no trouble about finding him, and Trist came to the point without any parley.

"Have you had notice from a man named Rushkin, livin' on Amsterdam avenue, to hunt up a missing niece of his?" he asked.

"Yes, but we haven't found her yet," the answer.

"Didn't s'pose you had, and that's what brings me here. I have got onto the trail, and I'm willin' to give you a pointer or two, if you are willin' to take 'em. What say?"

"Who are you?"

"I'm Trist Finley, better known as Train-boy Trist among the railroad boys. I was on the train the young woman came in on to-night."

"Well, what is it you know?"

"I know that she is in the hands of Jason Gorman, one of the worst crooks in ten States, or said to be, and I know that he took her in a cab to the corner of Grand and Bowery."

"That all you know?"

"That is all, up to date. She is in bad company, and it will be a tall feather in the police cap if you can find her and yank her out of that quarter and put her where she belongs. She's too nice a gal to let that sneak play fer a sucker, you bet!"

"And how do you know all this?"

Thereupon Trist had to tell the whole story, but he made it as brief as possible.

"All right," said the man in charge; "we'll attend to it, and you needn't put yourself to any further trouble about it, young man."

"Be sure you get her, then," urged Trist.

"Oh, we'll do that."

"All right."

Trist took leave and rejoined his friend, the cabbie.

"That's about the most gall I have run up against in a good while," he complained, as they drove off.

"What's that?" inquired Shorty.

"Why, the gall of that police feller. He never thanked me fer the boost I gave 'em, but said I needn't trouble myself any further about it. What do ye think of that fer cold cheek?"

"Why, I don't see nothin' in it."

"Yer don't? Why, they will profit by all the hard work I have been doin', even if I ain't been to much expense far as brain waste goes, and if I drop out and they can find the girl, they will come in for all the glory, don't you see? But, I am in it yet, right up to the chin."

"That's so; didn't think of it that way. Hope you find her first."

"So do I. I wouldn't 'a' told 'em anyhow, only for the young lady's sake, but she must be rescued jest as soon as possible, no matter who scores the credit for it."

"Yes, that's the main thing."

"And the next main thing after that is to get in a lick at the Broadway Crook."

The cabbie did not spare his horse, and

ere long he was at the point where he had set down his passengers.

"Now, this is the very place," he said, "and that was the way they went, right up the street in that direction, and that was the last I seen of 'em."

"Then that is all you can tell me, hey?"

"That's about all, I guess."

"Well, then, I won't bother you any longer, Shorty. And I'm a big heap obliged to you for what you have done already."

"Oh, that's all right."

"Well, good-night, Shorty."

"Good night."

And so they parted company, the cabbie gathering up his lines and driving away, while Train-boy Trist went off up the street.

"Now, what's to be done?" the news company's special asked himself. "Here I am again, plumb up against another snag, and I'm afraid this one is going to swamp me, if I don't look out sharp."

He thought hard, but he could not see the way out of the woods.

"But," he reasoned, "it ain't no darker than it was before, and I pulled along till I got this far. Never give up, Tristy. Never say die as long as you kin wiggle a little bit. You are on the right track, even if you can't smell the scent jest now, or sight the game."

The cabbie had left his passenger on the north-west corner of Bowery and Grand street.

They had started to walk west along the north side of Grand.

That was the last Shorty saw of them.

Only a moment's walk brought the Train-boy Trist to the corner of Elizabeth street, and there he stopped and scratched his head.

"I'm floored; no use denyin' that!" he complained. "How am I going to tell in what direction they went here? What is the use of a puddin'-headed foo, like me tryin' to play detective? Guess I had better give it up and get back to peddlin' candy and papers on the cars."

"But, if I do that, what will become of Sarah Sweetapple? And then that police mogul will come in fer all the glory, if there is any to be had, buildin' on the foundation I have laid fer him— No, by hokus, I won't give up till I have ter, and that settles it! Let's see, Gorman is a crook, and there is plenty o' crooked places around here; I'll begin and inquire for him."

But, it was now in the small hours of the morning, and most of the buildings were closed and dark.

He looked around on every hand.

A little distance up Elizabeth street was a light in front of a door, and Trist started for that.

He sprang up the steps and tried the door, but it was fast, and as that was what he had expected to find he had the other hand on the bell and gave that a jerk.

In a few moments the door was opened by a young woman.

"Say, do you know Jason Gorman?" Trist immediately asked.

"No, but I know who does," was the answer, as promptly given.

"Who?"

"The Duchess."

"And who the deuce is the Duchess?" demanded Trist.

"Her name is Emma Bigbie, I believe, but she is better known by that other name."

"And where does she hang out?"

"At No. — street."

"Good enough, and a heap obliged to you."

"Who are you, and what do you want with Jason Gorman?"

"I'm a messenger, and I have important word for his private ear; that's all, so good-night."

And with that Trist turned away, with a

broad grin upon his face and a feeling of lightness about the heart. Again he had picked up the clue, or thread, where it had seemed to be lost completely.

CHAPTER VII.

ANOTHER HAND IN THE GAME.

LEAVING Train-boy Trist for the time being, let us here take up another part of our romance.

A short time after Trist had left the house of Samuel Rushkin, on Amsterdam avenue, that gentleman came forth from his domicile and hastened to the nearest police station.

There he reported the case, giving all the information in his possession.

That done, he hurried off in another direction, finally taking a car, as if he had a considerable distance to go.

Coming down-town some distance below Fourteenth street, he there got out and hurried on foot again in another direction, stopping finally before a house and looking to make sure of the number.

There was a dim light in the hall, and a brighter one at one of the upper windows.

He mounted the steps and rung the bell.

There was no response, and he rang again, this time with more vim.

Now a window was raised, on the first floor, and a feminine voice made inquiry who was there.

"Are you the landlady?" asked Rushkin.

"Yes. What's wanted?"

"I must see Mr. Jack Minnie, at once, if he is in."

"Well, this is a nice hour to be making a call, I must say, sir; couldn't you wait till morning?"

"Do you suppose I would come around at this hour of the night, if it was not of the greatest importance? Please be as quick as you possibly can, madam."

"Well, who are you?"

"Tell him it's Mr. Rushkin."

The head was withdrawn and the window slammed.

It was plain enough that the landlady was not in the very best temper, and that she did not like being called out at that hour.

There was some delay, and then the door was opened by a young man, in only trowsers and gown, and the two men recognized each other at once.

"Come right in!" the younger invited.

"What the deuce is up?"

"Let's go to your room, and I'll tell you. We must have a talk, and this is no place for it."

The young man closed the door and led the way.

They were soon in his room, on the third floor, and as soon as the door had been shut Rushkin explained:

"The mischief is to pay, Jack, and I need your help at once. Sarah started for New York yesterday, and she was on the eleven o'clock train last night. She was robbed, and reached New York without a penny."

"Whew!"

"That is not all. A rascal fell in with her, made friends with her, and she is now in his power, papers and all, and goodness only knows where he has taken her to. I have told the police, and then came right here to tell you. You must get out and hustle to find her, somehow."

The younger man's face was serious enough.

"Tell me all you know about it, and how you got hold of the news," he urged.

This the other did, fully and freely, and he had an attentive listener in Jack Minnie.

"Well, this is serious enough," the younger remarked. "But, she is just as much lost as if she had been dropped into the biggest woods in the land. We can't do a thing but wait for the police to find her."

"I tell you we must do something, Jack,

somehow. She must be found this very night, or no telling what will become of her."

"Well, you kindly tell me how to go about it, and I'll undertake it."

"That is the puzzle of it."

"Of course it is. Maybe that boy will be able to get on track of her, and if he does, did you ask him to let you know at once?"

"Certainly, and he will bring her right to my house. I promised him a reward to make him take all the more interest in the matter. Poor girl! she is helpless, and it is for us to rescue her."

"And do you suppose the Skinners will know where she has gone to?"

"They will suspect, I don't doubt."

"And they will follow her up?"

"I wouldn't be surprised if they landed in New York inside of twelve hours, the old man and Tom, for they won't want to let that fortune get away from them."

"And if they find the girl first they will take her back with them, being her guardian and she being under age."

"They will try to, but they won't do it if I can prevent. I'll show up their little game."

"And suppose they charge you with the same scheme?"

"They will have to prove it."

"And so will you, and in the mean time they will have the best claim to her, and back she will have to go."

"She won't, if we can get hold of her first."

"How can you prevent?"

"We will conceal her till she is of age, which will not be long, and then she can defy them."

"Well, that's so, but if they can prove that you are hiding her they might make it warm for you, don't you think so? I think there is a better way."

"What is that?"

"Let the girl conceal herself, and then you can tell them you don't know where she is, and there will be no lie about it. I can be in the secret, and can see that everything goes right until she is of age."

"Well, that is a good idea, too; but, what is the use of planning until we know what we are planning about?"

"We know that now well enough."

"Yes; but, I mean, what's the use till we get the girl?"

Both were thoughtful for some moments, and Rushkin was the first to speak again.

"Well, I have told you what has happened, and I expect you to do your best toward recovering the girl, and the sooner she is found the better."

"I'll take a hand in it the first thing in the morning. In the mean time, if the police find her, or that youngster has luck, let me know not later than seven o'clock."

"Yes, I'll do that."

"It is useless to try to find her before then."

"Yes, I see that; we have told the police, and that is all we can do. But, what if Henry Skinner and his boy Tom come to town?"

"They will come right to your house, I suppose."

"Yes, sure."

"Well, you won't have to lie to them to say you haven't seen the girl."

"They may think I am lying, however, and they will make me all the trouble they can, for there is no love lost between the two families, I tell you."

"I'll tell you how I would work that."

"How?"

"Pretend to fall right in with them to find her."

"Yes, but suppose we do find her, that way, they will claim her and I will have to show my hand, then."

"Won't the girl naturally claim your protection?"

"Ha! that's so."

"And you can give it. Let them do what they can, and in the mean time the young woman can hide herself, as I said."

"I don't know but what you are about right."

"Or, another way, provided it could be worked, and if she is found to-night you can still pretend that she has not been found, and then we can all enter heart and soul into the work of looking for her."

"Yes, but the police would know, and there is the spoke in that wheel."

"Well, the first thing is to learn where she is now, and then begin our play when we see what hand we have got."

"That's the only thing we can do, I guess."

"But, we have a bad fellow to buck against, if what they say of that crook, Gorman, is true."

"You are right there," assented the old man. "I tell you, Jack, we haven't as sure a thing as we had, not by any means. Tell you what you had better do, my boy, I think."

"What is it?"

"Come home with me. Then, whatever turns up, you will be right on hand to do your little part, whatever it may be. Don't you think so?"

"I guess you are right, old man," was the assenting response. "I'll do that. There is too much at stake not to take some trouble in the matter, and besides, Sarah Sweetapple is too fine a girl to be left in the hands of that rascal."

CHAPTER VIII.

SARAH IN THE TOILS.

MEANTIME, what had become of Sarah Sweetapple?

But, before proceeding to that, just a few words concerning the young woman.

She was an orphan, as we have learned from the conversation of Samuel Rushkin with Train-boy Trist.

Prudence Rushkin, her mother, had married one Hiram Sweetapple, and he, upon the death of his wife, gave the baby Sarah into the keeping of his sister, who had married one Henry Skinner.

Hiram Sweetapple died a few years later, as we have already stated, leaving a considerable fortune in such a way that it would fall into the hands of his child on her coming of age, but which no one else could touch in any manner in the mean time, not even the interest.

The Skinners were country people, owning and working a large farm near one of the biggest towns in central Pennsylvania, and were considered well-to-do, as, in fact, they were. They had but one child, a son about twenty-four years of age. He was in love with Sarah, and his parents had favored the suit and had tried to induce Sarah to accept him.

She, however, had refused, though she would give no reason for her refusal, further than that she did not like Tom.

It was suspected, however, that there was another lover in the case, one Joe Wemple, a young man of the town, who, the Skinners declared, was no fit match for her, and they forbade him the house and kept Sarah pretty closely at home so that she could not meet him secretly.

This restraint galled the young woman, though she really cared nothing for Joe Wemple, and it served to set her all the more against Tom Skinner, who, as she intimated, cared nothing for her further than for the fortune she was to inherit when she came to age.

Now this raised the indignation of the Skinners, and it pained them, as they declared, that such a suspicion should have entered the young woman's head. It was, they believed, the work of that uncle in New

York, of whom they had never thought a great deal anyhow, and they went so far as almost to forbid any further correspondence with him on Sarah's part.

The girl's spirit rebelled still more, at this, for she rather liked her New York uncle, whom she had seen two or three times, and who had written to her occasionally ever since she was old enough to write in response. She wrote to him, telling him a rather high-colored story of her wrongs and persecutions, and asked him for the money with which to run away and go to New York, as we have heard Rushkin explain in full.

The money reached her, in due time, and one fine day Sarah Sweetapple was missing in the Skinner household.

She reached Philadelphia without adventure or mishap, and was on her way to New York, in the same car and train, before anything occurred worthy of mention.

A young man had entered the car at Philadelphia, a good-looking, well-dressed stranger, and Sarah had looked at him a little more than propriety warranted, yet it was with honest admiration on her part.

It did not escape the notice of the stranger, and presently he made the opportunity to speak to her. In a few minutes he was sharing her seat, and was making himself so agreeable that Sarah forgot that he was a stranger, or if not that, believed that she had found in him a true friend.

In a short time she had told him her story, in which he took the friendliest interest, sympathizing with her and promising to aid her all he could, if there was anything he could do.

Finally he begged to be excused, desiring to smoke, as he said, and retired to the smoking car, where he was immediately busy examining some papers.

It was some time later when Sarah missed her pocketbook, and what followed has been told.

After the train had started on from Rahway, succeeding the incidents related, she looked for the reappearance of the conductor, not knowing the particulars of the stop at that place.

And, while she still waited, although she ought to have realized that another was performing his duties on the train, her journey was completed and the train came to a standstill in the immense train shed at Jersey City, and what immediately followed then has been seen.

She now thought of her friend and new acquaintance, Mr. Green, as he had given her his name, and looked around for him, but at first he was not to be seen.

Just as she was leaving the shed, however, in the direction of the ferry, he suddenly appeared and spoke to her.

"A thousand pardons for my neglect, Miss Sweetapple!" he apologized. "I certainly expected to see you again before the train reached the end of its run, but I was detained. A fellow in the smoker struck the conductor, giving him a bad hurt, and I have been helping take care of him."

While speaking, rapidly, he reached and gently took her handbag from her hand, with the utmost politeness, and carried it for her.

"I was looking around to see if I could see you," the young woman admitted, "for I have not forgotten your offer of assistance."

"Ha! then you have thought of some way in which I can be of service to you. I am greatly pleased to hear that."

"It is something I would not think of asking of a stranger, but you have been so polite and kind to me that I dare ask you. Will you lend me sufficient car fare to carry me to my uncle's?"

"Why, with pleasure. But, what has happened?"

"I have been robbed!"

"Robbed?"

"Yes."

"Ha! then that explains it. Did you tell the conductor about it?"

"Yes, and he said he thought he could recover my pocketbook, though I am sure I don't know how he was going to do it."

"Did he say he knew who had taken it?"

"No; he simply told me to wait."

"That was it, then; he must have known that fellow took it, and when he went to him about it, that was what he struck him for. Too bad that I did not know this at the time."

"Yes, indeed, for then you might have saved the blow, and recovered my pocketbook and papers at the same time. I would not care so much for the money, but the papers can never be replaced. And you will put me on the right car, too, when we get to New York?"

"I can suggest a better way than that, and it will be a pleasure to me to be of service to you in that way, or any other. I hope to have the pleasure of your further acquaintance, too."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, the hour is late, too late for you to attempt to go to your uncle's alone, and I will get a cab and take you there."

"But, that will be a great trouble to you—"

"It will be a pleasure, I tell you. Do not raise a single objection, now, for I have taken you under my protection and I'm sure your uncle will thank me for it. And then we'll see about the lost papers."

"Well, if you insist, sir, but, uncle will pay the expense."

"All right, if he wants to, and all the same if he don't. Don't trouble your pretty head about anything; leave it all to me."

And there she was, the innocent, trusting fly in the toils of the spider.

On reaching New York they took a cab, as shown, and dismissed it at the spot where the driver afterward left Train-boy Trist.

There the Broadway Crook paid the driver, the girl offering a remark about as quoted afterward by Shorty, and as they turned away she asked if that were Amsterdam avenue, to which Gorman answered:

"It is right near by, now. The driver could not take us to the door, owing to the fact that the pavement is up. It is only a few steps."

"It is a good deal shorter distance than I supposed, sir."

"That is because the cab brought us quickly. I wish it were only as far again, and we had to walk the rest of the way."

This was said gallantly and softly, and the fellow kept up a steady flow of small talk from that time on, until he reached the destination he had in mind, and the girl was up the steps before she knew it.

Gorman rung the bell, and it was soon answered.

The door was swung open at sight of him, and he gave a signal with his eyes that was understood.

"Is Mr. Rushkin at home?"

"Yes, come right in, sir," was the response. "What name, please?"

"Mr. Green," with another wink, "bringing his niece, Miss Sarah Sweetapple. Tell him I want to see him."

"You see," turning to Sarah, as they were shown into a room, "I want to make sure that you are put right into your uncle's hands, as it were, before I leave you, and you can introduce me."

CHAPTER IX.

MIGHT HAVE WORKED, BUT—

OF course, the rascal had ascertained previously that the young woman had never visited her uncle in New York!

Had that been the case, that she had visited him, and knew the house and the way to it, he would have had more trouble in deceiving her than he did.

Even as it was, the young woman looked around the room into which they had been shown, with something of an air of suspicion, as the rascal could not fail to see, plainly enough.

He made some passing remarks while they waited, such observations as a stranger in a strange house might offer.

Presently the door opened and a woman entered the room.

"There was a mistake," she said, with a bow. "The girl thought Mr. Rushkin was in, but he is not. He will not be home till to-morrow."

"Well, it will make no difference," spoke Gorman, quickly. "This young lady is his niece, Miss Sarah Sweetapple, and he was expecting her, although he did not know just when she would arrive. I have no doubt he left some word with you concerning her, in event of her arrival during his absence?"

"Miss Sweetapple, indeed," with a pleased exclamation, and the woman stepped quickly forward and gave her hand. "Yes, your uncle mentioned you, and we have a room all ready to receive you. If you are tired, I will show you to it immediately, and I will see that you have some light refreshment before you retire. It is late, and I know you have had a long and tiresome journey."

"You are my uncle's housekeeper?" asked Sarah.

"Yes, my dear."

"Well, can you repay this gentleman for the expense he was put to in bringing me here? I know my uncle would do so, if he were here."

"Why, certainly. But, first let me show you to your room. You can wait, sir, till I have done that?"

"Yes, although it is not necessary."

"Yes, wait," said the young lady. "And, will you not call to-morrow and let my uncle thank you?"

"If you desire me to do so."

"Yes, do."

She gave him her hand, and the woman then led her from the room.

As soon as the door closed after them, Jason Gorman hugged himself, laughing heartily but silently, and then he slapped his leg.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "I never saw a game worked prettier than that in my life. The Duchess has done herself proud this time, no mistake, and I must compliment her on it."

He paced the floor till the woman returned.

She entered with a smile, and he caught her hand with a familiar slap.

"That was bang-up, Em.," he declared. "You caught on in the best way in the world."

"It would be funny if we couldn't work well together, by this time, Jason," was the response. "But, who is the hollyhock?"

"Just who I said, and there is big money in her for us, if we can only work it right. We will make that uncle of hers come down handsome, you bet, if he wants her."

"Maybe he won't want her?"

"Oh, but he will."

"What makes you so sure?"

"Because, there is a big fortune at stake."

"Ha!"

"This young woman is an heiress, as soon as she comes of age, and that will be in a short time."

"Yes, but there is danger in it for us, isn't there? What if the police come swooping down upon us and scoop us in, then it will not pay so well. I'm half sorry you brought her here."

"I have never got you into trouble with the police yet, have I?"

"That's so."

"And I won't this time. No police or any one else could possibly follow her here. She is as much lost as if she had been taken up to the moon. All you have got to do is to

take care that she don't get away, and I will do the rest."

"And where does my share come in?"

"I will take care of that, too. I'll pay you well, my fair Duchess."

"Well, all right, I'll take care of her, but I suppose the fun will begin early in the morning."

"What do you mean?"

"When she wakes up and finds herself locked in, and I have to tell her something of the truth."

"Yes, I suppose so; but, that don't matter. See that no harm comes to her, and that she does not escape, and if we don't reap a nice harvest it will be funny, that's all."

"Well, tell me all about it."

"And so the Broadway Crook did, and they seemed to find considerable to amuse them in the matter."

It was considerably later when Train-boy Trist rung the bell.

There was a little delay, and the door was opened.

"I want to see the Duchess," said Trist, in a matter-of-fact way. "Want to see her bad, too?"

"But, she has retired."

"No matter, got to see her. It is about the young woman brought here less'n a couple of hours ago."

This was a feeler.

"Then Gorman has sent you?" asked the woman who had opened the door.

That was enough for Trist; he knew he had struck the nail this crack, and that the girl was in the house.

"Of course," he answered. "Nobody else knows the girl is here, or so he said when he sent me. You needn't call the Duchess, though, if you will let me speak to the girl."

"Can't do that, nohow."

"That's what Gorman said; said I'd have to see the Duchess first."

"Well, I s'pose I'll have to call her."

"I guess you will."

Trist had entered the hall, and now the door was closed and the woman told him to wait there till she returned.

She went up-stairs, somewhere, and it was a considerable time before she reappeared, and during her absence Trist was trying his best to invent some plan of action.

It had begun to dawn upon him that he would probably find it impossible to get the young woman out of the house without police help.

And that was the very last thing in the world he wanted.

How would he work it?

He was just as far from any definite idea when the Duchess put in her appearance, having thrown on a loose wrap.

"Speak right out, now, whatever you have got to say," she demanded, in no gentle temper.

"Jason Gorman sent me here," lied Trist.

"Are you the Duchess?"

"Yes, that's what I'm called."

"Well, he said I was to come here and tell you to let me sleep right outside that girl's door. Said he didn't feel quite safe."

This came to Trist like an inspiration.

"He told you that?"

"Think I'd take all this trouble, if he hadn't? I'm a pal of his, and he is goin' to pay me fine fer this soft snap."

"And you are to sleep in the hall?"

"That's the programme, and I think I kin do it to perfection, too."

"It is a wonder he did not think of this when he was here, is all I have got to say. I have a notion to refuse."

"Well, if you do that I can't help it, of course, but if you do, and he said mebbe you would, then he wants you to sleep there yourself—there or inside the room, jest as you please."

"He said that?"

"You seem to be mighty s'picious. If you don't want me here, say so; I have told you what I have to say."

Trist moved toward the door, as if he did not care a cent whether he remained or not, and in fact he had about made up his mind that he wanted to get out and bring in the police.

"You can stay," said the woman. "It is plain that you couldn't have come here with such a story if Gorman hadn't sent you, so it must be all right. Come with me and I will fix a bunk for you, and I'll—"

There was a click at the latch, the door opened, and Jason Gorman stepped into the hall!

CHAPTER X.

TRIST HAS A "SCRAP."

TRAIN-BOY TRIST felt himself turn pale. His heart gave a great leap, and it seemed as if it intended to jump out.

But, that was only for the moment. He saw he was in for it, and by the time Jason recovered from his surprise Trist had done the same.

There had been a momentary tableau. The Broadway Crook looked in amazement at Train-boy Trist, and questioningly at the Duchess.

She, on her part, looked as inquiringly at him, but read easily enough that the youth had come to her with a lie, and that Jason had not sent him.

"You here?" Jason exploded.

"You bet!" cried Trist, defiantly.

"And you did not send him?" asked the woman.

"I send him?" in surprise.

"He said you did."

"What brought you here with that lie?" cried Gorman, fiercely.

"Business!" was the retort. "I would have carried it out, too, if you hadn't poked your nose in."

Trist had edged toward the door, but Gorman placed his back against it.

"And what is your business here?"

"You know well enough!"

"How should I know?"

"You know the swat you gave Conductor Lynch last night, don't you? And you know that I said you couldn't get away from me, don't you?"

"And you mean to say that you followed me here?"

"That is just the size of it."

"And you want to settle with me for that little matter with the conductor, do you?"

"That's what I'm here for."

"He lies again," here put in the woman. "He said you had sent him to guard the young woman all night, and he told such a straight story, that I had to believe him."

The crook fairly turned green, for the moment.

"What young woman?" he demanded. "I don't know anything about any young woman."

"Of course not," chimed in the woman, taking up the cue. "I meant to fool him and let him stay here till you came in, when you could deal with him. He couldn't deceive me."

Train-boy Trist had to laugh.

"Well, if that ain't the thinnest I ever heard!" he exclaimed. "Of course, there is no young woman here; I was only fooling, too. Sarah Sweetapple wasn't brought here; oh, no. Do you think I am so blind that I couldn't follow a plain track like you left, Gorry?"

The rascal looked puzzled, and he was puzzled, too, to know how this youth had been able to shadow him, for he was well aware that he had remained at Rahway to take the conductor home.

Gorman, in disguise, had been on the train, having boarded it again in the way Trist had suspected, and he had seen the whole matter.

"Well, supposing she was here, what would you do about it?" the fellow demanded.

"I have come to take her to her uncle," declared Trist, fearlessly.

He was far from seeing his way out of the terrible dilemma, however, and as for the rescue, that appeared to be knocked into a cocked hat.

But, nevertheless, he was determined to keep his upper lip just as stiff as possible, as he said to himself, for he believed there would be some way out of the woods if he did.

Jason laughed, much amused.

"I don't know how you would go about it," he said.

"No, nor I," added the Duchess, "for he does not appear to be able to take himself away?"

"You are right, and he won't get away in a hurry, either. Young man, you have put your head into a trap, do you know it?"

"I knew I was doin' that when I came here."

"The more fool you to come, then."

"Well, what are you going to do with me?"

"Consider yourself my prisoner, and if you resist you will get a dose of the same medicine that conductor got."

"Yes, and if you try it on you may get somethin' worse, so be careful and go slow, old boss. You will find that I'm a hornet, if you go to corner me too close, and don't you forget it!"

If anything, Trist was the larger of the two, and he certainly did look as if he could make a good showing in a fight.

But, then, they were three to one against him, counting the Duchess and the servant who had first come to the door, and they no doubt had other help within call.

Gorman had produced his "life-preserver" out of his sleeve, and had it in hand with a firm grip.

Trist had his back to the wall, and was watching closely.

Suddenly the rascal sprung forward.

Trist dodged; the blow struck the wall, "plunking" a hole in the plaster, and in the same instant Trist's fist "plunked" Gorman in the eye.

This caused the Broadway Crook to reel backward, and Trist following up his advantage gave him another blow with the other fist that carried him to the floor.

The woman, too, had sprung at him, and he now gave her a shove that sent her to the floor on her back.

And in the same moment he sprung for the door.

But, the servant was making for him, before he could quite touch the door she reached him, throwing her arms around him.

Trist struggled, but the woman was strong and held on with a will, at the same time calling for help, and Gorman and the Duchess were already getting upon their feet.

The young detective knew that if he received a blow from the jack now, it would be his death-blow, angered as the man was, and he had that to look out for.

Wheeling suddenly, carrying the woman with him, he lifted his foot and planted his heel squarely on the man's breast.

Down he went, and Trist called "police!" with all the power of his lungs.

Twisting around in the embrace of the woman who was holding him, he got hold of her neck, and in a moment he had forced her to let go her hold, when he flung her from him.

But, there was the Duchess again, now with a wicked-looking knife in her grasp, rushing at him, and without any ceremony or compunction he served her the same as if she had been a man, giving her a blow that knocked her out of the fight for some time to come. And still he was keeping up his call for police assistance, with a double purpose.

In the first place, the police are not desired in such resorts, and in the second place he wanted help if possible to get it.

He had now a moment of respite, and he tried the door.

Just as he did so there came a thundering rap upon it from the outside, and he knew he had help.

It took him but a moment to open it, when in came three policemen, but as they entered, the hall was suddenly plunged into darkness, the servant turning off the lights.

She had been trained, and knew the proper thing to do at such a critical moment.

"What's the row here?" demanded the first of the officers.

"Are you looking for a missing young woman?" asked Trist.

"Yes; who are you and what do you know about her?"

"I am a detective, and I have run her to this den. She must be found before they get away with her. But, get these prisoners, first."

"Where are they?"

"On the floor."

Trist had been feeling for a match, and now having it, he struck it and cast a little light upon the scene.

Gorman and the Duchess were gone, and the servant, too, was *non est* as it were. There was no time to lose, for they might spirit away the girl before they could be found.

"Here, light this before your match goes out," ordered one of the policeman, as he presented a small pocket lantern. "We'll have a hand in this thing yet, I guess, if nothing breaks. There, now we are all right. Where is the young woman? Do you know, young man?"

"She's in one of the rooms up-stairs," answered Trist. "Two of you come; the other remain here on guard at the door."

CHAPTER XI.

A STRANGE REQUEST MADE.

THE moment the three officers appeared, Trist knew what it meant.

They were there in search of the missing young woman, probably searching the whole neighborhood for some trace of her.

Hence the question he had put to them so promptly and now he led the way up the stairs at a run, the officer with the bull's-eye right at his heels, and another following.

Declaring himself a detective, which he had done for the purpose of stopping idle questions, he had assumed the leadership with something of authority, and it was not questioned. One of the policemen remained at the door, as he had directed, to be on guard.

Doors were heard opening and shutting, on the floors above, and there were curses and exclamations commingled.

When they reached the landing and looked along the hall, there was a woman with a bedspread wrapped around her, her face the picture of terror, and Trist recognized her at once.

It was Sarah Sweetapple, and Trist knew her by the picture he had seen of her at her uncle's.

"Mercy!" she cried, in terror. "Is the house afire?"

"Not a bit," answered Trist. "You are Sarah Sweetapple, ain't you?"

"Yes."

"Then you are the gal we are after."

"What do you mean?" asked the girl, with new affright. "What do you want with me?"

"We have come to take you to your uncle."

"Take me to my uncle! Isn't this his house?"

"Not by a hatful it ain't. That Broadway blackleg in broadcloth swelled your head in an awful way, miss, but we have circum-

navigated him and his little game ends right here."

"Who do you mean?"

"That sleek chap that you met on the train."

"Not Mr. Green!"

"The same fellow, if that was the name he went by. But, dress yourself, and we will get you out of here in a hurry."

"Then whose house is this?"

"Don't know, and that don't matter. It is the very best place in the world for you to get out of, and the sooner you make yourself seldom here, the better."

"But, the lady said my uncle lives here, and that he is away—"

"She lied like ruin. Your uncle lives on Amsterdam avenue, No. —, and that is more'n a mile away."

"He is telling you the truth, young lady," spoke up the leading one of the policemen. "Get on your things as soon as you can and come with us, and we will see to it that you get safely home."

"Mercy! and he appeared such a gentleman!"

"That was his game," said Trist. "But, no more lingo. Get on your duds and let's hustle."

"All right; I will be ready in five minutes, and now I can see some things that I did not see before—that is, in the right light. I will be ready just as soon as I possibly can."

She disappeared into the first room on the right.

"But, are we goin' to let that fellow get away?" reminded one of the policemen.

"Hello, that's so!" cried Train-boy Trist.

"You stay by that door till the young woman is ready," he directed one, "and you come with me," to the other with the lantern.

He still spoke with his tone of authority, and, youth though he was, they obeyed him.

He and the officer with the lantern went down stairs again, and a brief search revealing the gas turn-off, they turned it on again, and lighted up the hall.

This done, they began their search.

They descended to the basement floor, but no one was there, and an open rear door was suggestive of flight.

"They have got away from us," said the officer.

"I guess you are right," answered Trist, "but we'll search the house, all the same."

"Yes, we can do that. Who are you?"

"I'm a special."

"What's your name?"

"Finley."

"One of Byrnes's men?"

"Just now I am, or one of his boys, just as you please."

Trist's answers were short and to the point, and he was so full of business that there was no room for doubt.

Beginning on the next floor, they went to every room in the house, and where they were denied admittance, they compelled it under threat of bursting in the doors if it was not granted.

No matter what they discovered; they did not find the person for whom they looked—, Jason Gorman. He had made good his escape, and Emma Bigbie, or the "Duchess," with him. And, by the time their search was completed, Sarah Sweetapple was dressed and ready to go.

"Now," said Trist, to the policemen, "one of you come with me to the Grand street station of the Elevated, and the others go and report the girl found. Just say to Headquarters that Finley got on the track and that you got there in time to lend a hand. They will know who Finley is, for I was there not an hour ago and told them I was coming here."

"And you'll speak a word for us to-morrow to Byrnes?"

"You can bet I will."

"All right."

And so the news company's special carried his point, and scored one against the police, with their help.

Two of the officers set off together, while the other went with Trist in the direction of the Grand street station of the Elevated Railway, as Trist had directed.

"I'll be glad when I see my uncle face to face," spoke the young woman, as they went along. "This is enough to drive one crazy, almost."

"You can thank your stars that this young man was smart enough to find you," said the officer.

"Yes, but what purpose had that other man in deceiving me?"

"Only to get at that fortune that's coming to you, that's all," explained Trist. "But, I am not done with him yet."

"How could he get at the fortune?"

"He holds your papers, and he can make your uncle pay well for them, anyhow. But, I will get another crack at him before we close the game, you bet!"

So ran their conversation until they reached the station, and when they were safely on board the train the policeman left them.

They had quite a long ride, up Sixth avenue, thence continuing up Ninth, and so on as far as Eighty first street, where they got out, Trist knowing that station to be the nearest to the desired number over on the next avenue.

All the way Trist had kept a keen lookout for their enemy.

He did not know but that Gorman would be cunning enough to follow them, and he might attempt the rescue before they reached their destination.

When they left the train Trist made as much haste as possible in the direction of their objective point, with a suspicious eye upon every man who came any where near them.

Now that he had rescued the heiress, he had no intention of having her taken away from him if he could hinder it.

But, his fears were groundless and his precautions useless.

There was a light burning, now, and as soon as he rung the bell, the door was opened by Rushkin.

"Uncle!" exclaimed the young woman, with a glad cry, recognizing him immediately, and she sprang forward, sobbing, and threw herself into his arms.

"My poor child!" he greeted her, giving her an embrace. "But you are safe now, and no need to cry about it. You have done well, young man, mighty well," turning to Trist.

"Yes, I guess I have earned the reward," Trist answered.

"And you shall have it, too. Run right up-stairs, there Sary, and I'll be up as soon as I pay this young gentleman for his services."

The girl first thanked Trist herself, and then obeyed, when the old man turned again to the news company's special, extending some money as he did so, at the same time saying:

"Here's your reward, and five dollars more, young man. The five is for your silence in this matter. You see, this girl had to run away from folks that were trying to rob her of her fortune, and if they can't find her it will be all the better; do you see?"

CHAPTER XII.

TRIST GETS A TRIP.

THE old man thrust the money into Trist's hand as he spoke.

Trist took it, but in a thoughtful manner, for now there was something else for him to think about.

What reason had this man for not wanting it known that the girl had been recovered

and safely landed beneath his roof? Had he not applied to the police for aid? Did he want them to continue the search?

These things popped into the young detective's mind instantly.

"Much obliged for the reward," he said, "but you can't keep this a secret, for the police know of the rescue."

"Oh! that is the case, eh?" in something of a tone of displeasure, or at any rate so Trist imagined. "Well, it don't matter, then," carelessly said. "Keep the extra five, anyhow."

"All right, uncle, and much obliged," and with a click of the heels and something of a military salute, Trist left the house and the door was closed upon him.

As he turned away he took off his hat and gave a vigorous scratch.

"That is something that I can't get through my thick head," he said to himself.

"After puttin' all the police of New York on the track, then he wants the discovery kept secret. That beats my time."

And it continued to beat his time, too.

"I'll be hanged if I know what to make of it," he finally declared, stopping short.

"It strikes me that maybe I have placed that young woman out of the fryin' pan into the fire. I wonder if that uncle is altogether straight himself? But, he must be, or she would never 'a' run away to come to him."

He had been tempted to turn back again, for the moment, but having no good sound reason for doing so, he continued on his way.

He had not gone far when he was seized from behind by strong hands, and before he could utter a cry a hand was clapped over his mouth. In almost the same moment he was lifted from the ground.

Looking, as quickly as he had the chance to do so, he found that he was in the custody of two powerful men.

In a minute or less he had been hustled into a carriage.

Both men got in with him, and the driver started off at once, without the need of being directed.

The interior of the vehicle was dimly lighted, by the lamps on the carriage itself and by the lamps of the street, and Trist recognized one of the captors as no other than Gorman, the blackleg and all-around crook.

Gorman now took a pistol from his pocket, cocked it, and leveled it at the young detective's head.

"Now, you utter a sound, when your mouth is released, and see what will happen," he threatened.

The other man took his hand from over Trist's mouth.

"I want you to answer a question or two," the crook then went on to say. "Did you turn that young woman over to her uncle?"

"Yes, I did!" Trist answered, emphatically.

"Well, we thought that would be what you would do, but we were too late to intercept you. Now, we will give you your choice of two things, and you have got to make up your mind quick."

"Name 'em."

"You have got to pledge us your help, or die."

"I'll pledge you my help, then, every time. I'm in no hurry to shuffle off the coil."

"It is easy to say that, but we'll see whether you mean it or not when it comes to the test. We want to get that girl back again into our hands, and you have got to help us."

"Help you or die, eh?"

"Exactly."

Trist was forcing himself to coolness, but he did not feel cool by any means.

He knew that he was in a bad situation, and he did not see his way out of it. In fact, it did not look as if he was likely to get out.

"Well, what is going to be done?" he

asked. "You will have to lay the plans, fer I am no good at that kind of thing."

"Oh, no, we know you are not. How did you hunt me out the way you did?"

"Well, I have a keen scent, you see, and—"

"Bosh! I don't know how you did it, but the fact remains that you did it, all the same."

"Yes, I guess that's right," acquiesced Trist, with quiet exultation.

"Well, now to the point: That girl will not do old Rushkin a bit of good, without the papers she has lost, and there is no way he can get them except through you."

"Through me? Just tell me what I've got to do with them?"

"You are going to him, and say you know where they are and how to get them."

"And what good will that do you?"

"You will go in a carriage, and you will say that the girl must come with you to identify them."

"And what, if the old codger wants to come to?"

"Let him come. In fact, invite him, so that he will not suspect."

"And you expect me to play into your hands, do you?"

"Take your choice, that or death."

"And what if I deceive you?"

"You'll never do it but once. You will be watched."

"Why didn't you take somebody you could trust?"

"Because, you are the only one Rushkin and the girl will trust, don't you see?"

"And when is the experiment to be tried?"

"In the morning. There will be no suspicion by daylight, and you will be able to work it."

"And where is the young woman to be taken?"

"That don't concern you; the driver will take care of that. All you have got to do is to get the girl into the carriage."

"And if I won't do it—"

"If you don't you will die!"

"And what are you going to do with me in the mean time?"

"Keep you prisoner, for you have done enough mischief for one night."

"Well, all right; you have got the bulge on me, and I s'pose I'll have to do as you say."

"I guess you will."

"And then, when the job is done, what's up?"

"Why, you will be allowed to go free, of course, and that will settle it."

But Trist was not deceived; it would be settled, no doubt, but not that way—not much!

Let him play into their hands, and they would settle him when they had no further use for him.

Trist knew that perfectly well. Gorman would then take his revenge upon him, and would still his tongue so that he could never cross his path to upset his plans again.

"Then I'm your pippin," the youth avowed.

"All right, then. You have played against me once, and now you must play for me to win. I'll not only give you your life, but reward you as well."

"Don't say any more about it," said Trist.

"All I want now is a place to lie down and take a little shut-eye."

"And I'll give you that pretty shortly, now."

The carriage rattled along, at a moderate gait, for they wanted no police interference and made no attempt at speed, and Gorman held his pistol still in hand.

It was evident that he would not trust Train-boy Trist for a moment, until he had landed him safely in some place of confinement.

At last they reached their destination,

which was pretty well down-town, comparatively, and Trist had lost his bearings by that time, although he had tried to keep the streets in mind.

The carriage drew up before a dingy house, in a dark street, and the youth was hurried out and up the steps, with the pistol pressed against his head and Gorman hissing a threat into his ear. It certainly looked, now, as if Trist would fare pretty badly.

The Broadway Crook opened the door himself, and they entered, and the youth was taken immediately to a room at the rear of the hall, into which he was shoved and the door was closed upon him.

"Now, you stay there," commanded the crook. "When we want your help we will let you know."

CHAPTER XIII.

SARAH SAFE AT LAST.

LET us now return to Sarah Sweetapple.

"Have we mentioned that Rushkin's living-rooms were over a store?"

Such was the fact, and the hallway opened on the street, after the common fashion.

The building, by the way, belonged to Rushkin, and he was the proprietor of the store in question.

When Sarah ran up-stairs, as her uncle had directed, she saw light coming out of an open door in the front, and entered that room, to find herself in the presence of a young man.

He was a stranger to her.

As soon as she entered he rose and bowed, saying:

"Let me introduce myself. My name is Jack Minnie, and Mr. Rushkin is my best friend."

The young woman bowed, in an embarrassed manner, as the stranger politely tendered her a chair, and he added further:

"Your uncle has been nearly crazed concerning you, and we have been doing all in our power to rescue you out of the hands of your captors. I am glad you are safe at last."

"Thank you!" spoke Sarah.

Rushkin was heard coming, then, and no more was said.

"My dear child!" he exclaimed, as he burst into the room. "How glad I am that you are safe! Let me introduce my friend, Mr. Jack Minnie, who has been aiding in the search for you. Mr. Minnie, my niece, Sarah Sweetapple."

The young man made his very best bow.

"I had already introduced myself," he said. "I was just saying how anxious we—that is, how anxious you have been."

"You had it right in the first place, Jack, for you have been as anxious as I. But, Sarah, don't remove your things, for you are not altogether safe here. Let me explain."

The girl looked at him with wonderment depicted on her face.

"Why, what is the matter?" she asked.

"You know you can be too easily found here."

"Who will find me?"

"Why, old Skinner, of course."

The girl paled.

"You do not think he will follow me, do you?"

"Of course he will follow you. Wouldn't wonder if he landed in New York this very morning."

"But, he will not know that I have come to New York; I paid my fare on the cars, and he can't find out."

"No matter; he will suspect that you have come here to me, and he will come here the very first place to find you, don't you see?"

"But, you will not let them take me back, will you?"

"That is just where the rub is, my dear niece; he has a claim upon you till you are

of age, which I have not, and he will have the best of me. He will call on the police to help him."

"Mercy!"

"You see just how it is; and now that I have gone so far to help you, I am willing to take the risk of going a little further. If you will be guided by me I will plan things so that you can keep out of his grasp till after you are of age, and then you can do as you please."

"Why, I will do what you say, of course, uncle."

"Well, then, I will take you to another house right away, where you will remain until this thing cools off."

"But, what will you say to the Skinners?"

"I will tell them that you have run away from me, because I said I would send you right back to them."

"And then they will begin a search for me."

"Let them."

"But, where do you intend to take me?"

"To the house of a married sister of Mr. Minnie here, who will take care of you."

"You couldn't ask a better place, I assure you," spoke up the young man. "I am deeply interested in your troubles with those people, Miss Sweetapple, and will lend you all the aid I can."

"Well, let us go at once, then, for I am about tired out. Think of it! what a time I have been having!"

"It is too bad, my poor child."

"How far is it?"

"Not a great way."

"Does the lady expect me?"

"Well, no; but that does not matter," assured Minnie.

"Then, uncle, could I not remain here until morning? The Skinners are not likely to get here early."

"We don't want to take the risk, child, for they may be nearing the city even now, and may come here at once on their arrival. I will go with you, and Jack can go ahead and tell his sister."

"If you think it is for the best, I'll go at once."

"And it certainly is the safest thing to do."

"But, I had better bring a cab," said Minnie. "I know where there is a stable not far far from here—"

"You can stop and send the cab, my boy, and we will come right on just as soon as it gets here. I tell you, Sarah, when Samuel Rushkin undertakes a thing he means business."

The little details were quickly arranged, and Minnie left the house.

Rushkin then prepared for the street again, talking with his niece while doing so.

He was the same as she remembered him the few times she had seen him, and his manner was as kindly as the tone of his occasional letters had ever been. She had no reason to mistrust him.

Presently a ring at the bell announced the coming of the cab.

"There it is!" said the old man. "Come, now, my dear, and you will soon be where you can throw all care aside and rest."

They left the room and went down, and a cab was in waiting at the door.

"You were sent here from the stables?" asked Rushkin.

"Yis, sor."

"All right, then. You know where to go to now?"

"Yis, sor."

"Very well. Get right in, Sary, and away we go."

The young woman obeyed, the old man following her, and the next moment they were off.

Their destination was a house of the ordinary kind, on a street that could lay no claim to style or greatness at its best.

It, the house, was now deserted, and not a

light was to be seen in any house on the block, save the one before which the cab had stopped, and there the door was immediately opened.

Jack Minnie appeared, and opened the door of the cab.

"It is all right," he announced. "My sister will take care of your niece, Mr. Rushkin, and all trouble is at an end."

"Of course she will take care of her, Jack; we didn't look for anything else. Get right out, Sary, and Jack's sister will stow you away in bed and you can sleep till noon."

"Won't you come in with me, uncle?"

"Why, certainly, if you want me to; didn't think of it."

They both got out and went up the steps, Jack accompanying them, having told the driver to wait.

In the hall was a motherly looking woman, who greeted Sarah with a kiss the minute she was introduced, and Jack said to her:

"Now, Mary, remember that Miss Sweetapple is not at home to anybody except her uncle or me, for those Skinners might find her hiding-place by some chance or other."

"Oh, I will take the best of care of her, never fear!" the assurance.

"All right. She needs rest now."

"And she shall have it."

Another word or two, and the young man and Rushkin took leave, getting into the cab together.

The moment they were within and the door closed, they grasped hands, laughing heartily, and Jack Minnie remarked:

"Well, old man, how was that for high?" I think it will puzzle the Skinners, or anybody else, to get the young lady out of your hands now, don't you?"

"Yes, I should think so," the response.

"It was very well done, Jack. Now, we have only to recover the papers, somehow, and the young lady will be secure in her fortune."

CHAPTER XIV.

TRIST IN A NEW ROLE.

TRAIN-BOY TRIST found himself in utter darkness.

He heard the door locked, heard the parting words of Gorman, and realized that he was in a fix.

"Well, here is a measley state of things, sure enough," he said to himself. "I guess I will have to take down my sign and give up playing detective. I'd make a better driver for an ash-cart."

He stood where he had stopped, not caring to blunder around too much till he saw where he was.

Feeling in his pockets for matches, he soon discovered some, and lighting one, he was able to take a survey of his prison quarters.

The room in which he found himself was entirely bare, destitute of even a single article of furniture, and there was not a sign of a window to be seen on any side.

There was one other door, or such there had been, but now a wainscoting extended all around the room and across the lower half of that door, thus effectually closing it up. Such a barren hole it had never been Trist's misfortune to behold in his life before.

"I'm in for it," he said to himself. "No use trying to get out of here, that is a dead dog. Might just as well take it easy, I s'pose."

He threw himself on the floor, folding his arms under his head for a pillow, and gave himself up to thinking.

This new turn was something he had never dreamed of.

There was only one thing for him to do, and that was, to pretend to fall in with the desires of the blackleg crook till chance offered to throw him over and escape.

He knew the kind of man he had to deal with, and that his life would be held lightly. He might be put out of the way here, and no

person save his murderer would ever know what had become of him.

That one thing, then, was settled.

The next move, what was he to do when he went to Rushkin with the story he was to tell?

He was turning it over in his mind, looking at it in various ways, and finally his ideas became more or less grotesque, and then he slept.

When he awoke he was being rudely shaken.

He sprang up quickly.

"Come," cried the Broadway Crook, for it was he, "get a move on you, for we have some business ahead of us now."

"All right; I'm ready for business, you bet!" asserted Trist.

"Come with me," and he at once led the way out of the room.

Trist following, was conducted up-stairs and into a room that was well furnished.

"Now, sir, there is the bath-room; go in and slick yourself up," Gorman ordered, indicating a partly open door. "After that I'll breakfast you."

"There is nothin' mean about you, anyhow," commented Trist.

"I am going to do the square thing by you, and expect you to do the same thing by me."

"That is the only kind of business I ever do," rejoined Trist, and he meant it to be understood. "I have got to obey orders, anyhow, I suppose."

"You will, or fare the worse."

"And the first order is a wash, and the next order will be breakfast. Good enough. I'm in on that run! You can put my box aboard, and I'll work the cars, you bet!"

With that Trist dodged into the bath-room, where he did full justice to himself, coming forth as fresh as a daisy.

"There, now, you look something like," commented the rogue. "Now the old man and the girl will have confidence in you, and you will have no trouble in carrying out what I want done."

"Yes, but the breakfast first, you know."

"Certainly."

The crook touched a bell, and when it was answered he ordered breakfast for two brought to the room.

"Now," he said, while they waited, "let me give you a lesson on what you are to do, for there must be no half-way business about it."

"Certainly."

"In the first place, you will go to the house, in a carriage, and ask for Mr. Rushkin. There is no doubt but you will find him at home. Then tell him you are on track of the papers."

"Jes' so."

"You will tell him there is one way for him to secure them, and only one way. If he does not accept, they will be destroyed, and that will settle the whole transaction. He must bring five thousand dollars cash and come straight to this house with you."

"Exactly!"

"And he will come fast enough, for that sum is only a percentage on the whole fortune at stake, you see. But, he may be inclined to play some trick. In that event the papers will be destroyed anyhow, and he will not find me here when he comes. In fact, I am going to follow and watch, and if I see anything crooked, that will cut the business at once."

"Why don't you come right along, and have the papers ready to hand over?"

"Oh, no, thank you, I am not running my head into any trap. He might make a scene, you know. If he comes here I will be boss of the show, you see."

"Then you have changed your mind about wanting the girl to come?"

"Yes, I give that up, now; couldn't handle that, now that she has got away from me. You see, I am not afraid to talk to you,

for you are in my power, and I do not mean to let you get out of my hands until this thing is finished."

Trist failed to see clear through the villain's scheme. Either he had something back which he did not reveal, or else he was making a mistake.

Once let Trist get out of the house, and it would be as he said, to a certain degree. The next words of the crook, however, threw more light upon the matter, and made it a little more clear.

"Of course," he added, "I mean to reward you, as I said. If we pull through all right, I'll give you a hundred dollars. If not, I can swear that you had part in the affair with me, and you will go up the river. You can see that I have got a double grip on you."

"I guess you are about right."

The breakfast was served, and Trist did full justice to it.

When they had done, Gorman looked at his watch, and noting the time, arose from the table.

The carriage had been ordered for nine o'clock, sharp, and it was ten minutes to the hour now; whereat the Broadway Crook got his hat and coat and made ready.

"You are not goin' in the carriage, are you?" Trist asked in exclamation.

"Why not?" with a smile.

"But, do you suppose he will come if he sees you?"

"I have been doing some more thinking, my young friend, and I'm going along."

"But, couldn't we drive right to Police Headquarters with you?"

"I did not admit that I am going in the carriage. I shall follow right behind in a cab, however."

"Oh!"

"And then if all is right, I will follow you back here and come in after the old man has entered. See? If not all right, that is the last you will see of me, and good-by to the papers and your hundred dollars."

"I savvy. I'm goin' for that hundred, you bet."

"Well, come right along."

They went down, and in a moment a carriage pulled up before the door.

Right behind it came a cab, and when Gorman had put Trist safely into the first, he got into the latter.

He had directed the driver of the carriage, and the two vehicles started off, the one in the lead and the other not far in the rear, and Trist's mind was busy with a counterplot.

The crook had taken a risk, but he did not know the extent of it.

He had not been able fully to calculate the caliber of the youth he had to deal with.

Trist had no intention of playing into his hands, though it was better for the success of a counterplot that he should pretend to do so.

He thought hard, looking at the matter from every point of view possible, and by the time the destination was reached he had a scheme in mind which he thought would carry the point for him.

When he got out of the carriage he noticed that the cab had stopped not far away, and he saw Mr. Rushkin in the door of his store.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SKINNERS PUT IN AN APPEARANCE.

"Ha! good-morning, young man," Trist was greeted.

"Good-morning, sir!" the cheery response.

"I have got some news for you."

"Yes? Well, I hope it is good news, and I can see your face has no bad news stamped on it."

"It is good news, sure enough," declared Trist. "I have holed those papers, and you have only got to go and get them."

"Why didn't you bring them?"

"Couldn't do it. You have got to put up a little money for them, if you desire to get them."

"I won't do it!"

"Then they will be destroyed, that's all."

"But, who has got them? How much money does he want for them?"

"The fellow is Gorman, the man who got away with the young lady last night, and he demands five thousand dollars or no papers."

The old man turned the color of chalk, almost, for a moment.

"Great heavens!" he gasped. "What does he take me for?"

Trist had noticed that the driver of the carriage was watching him, and his suspicion that he was a pal of Gorman was confirmed.

"He knows the papers are worth that much to the young lady," Trist rejoined.

"He has set his figure, and if you don't want to buy, all you have got to do is to say so. See?"

But he immediately added, in whispers:

"Ask me in! Driver watching. I'm with you, every time!"

The old man was sharp, and he "caught on" instantly, giving Trist the tip.

"Five thousand!" he cried. "What is he thinking about? I wouldn't give ten cents for them."

"Well, that's your business."

Trist made the move as if to return to the carriage.

"Hold on, though!" the old man called out. "Come in here a minute till we talk this thing over."

He turned back into his store, motioning Trist to follow, and the young detective did so, giving a wink to the driver as if to say:

"It's all right now, partner."

No sooner had he disappeared than the driver made a signal that was seen by the occupant of the cab.

The scheme was working, and apparently all right for the pretty clique who had arrayed themselves against the orphan girl and her fortune. But, how would it terminate?

"You see," whispered Trist, as soon as they were inside, "that fellow got the bulge on me, and he has forced me to come here on this business. But, I'm playing against him, every time, though you will have to fall in line as I tell you in order to win."

"What do you mean?"

"You will have to come with me, just as if you meant to pay over the money."

"But, I might be walking into a trap. Maybe they would threaten my life if I didn't pay twice that amount."

"I'll take care of that part of it, if you will do just what I tell you."

"And what is your plan?"

"I'll give it to you in few words, for we must chin heap fast. You come with me, and give directions to drive to your banker's. It isn't to be supposed that you carry five thousand dollars around in your vest pocket, and the only way to get it is to go to the bank."

"I see, I see."

"You needn't draw the money there—in fact, I would advise you not to do so, but just make believe."

Trist said this in order to give Mr. Rushkin full confidence in him.

And it was a plan that succeeded, too.

"Yes, yes, now I see that you are in earnest in siding with me, and that you are not in league with the rascals. I'll do just what you say. We must have those papers at any cost. And then what should we do?"

"Pay close attention now: You tell your banker if any one comes in after you go out and wants to know how much money you have drawn, to tell the person five thousand dollars. That will show that you mean business. But, you will tell him more than that, at the same time."

"What can I tell him further?"

"Tell him to send the bank-detective to follow you on the quiet, to No. — street. Your enemy will get out of a cab and enter the house after you. Then, when we give the alarm, help must rush in. See?"

"Yes, yes, I grasp it all, my young friend; it shall be done just as you have said."

"And you have pistols for sale, here?"

"Yes."

"Get one for each of us, and we'll have them out of sight till they are wanted."

"Good! good! Young man you helped me last night, and now you are bound to help me again, in the interest of my niece. You shall lose nothing by it, that I promise."

"How is the young lady this morning?"

"She is all right."

Rushkin took a couple of revolvers out of a showcase, and, loading them, handed one to Trist.

"I'll go right out, now," said Trist, "and wait for you. It won't do for us to remain in here together any longer, or they may suspect. When you come out don't look up or down the street, but pay attention only to the driver."

"All right! all right!"

"And, call your clerk to the door and tell him where you are going, so it will appear all the more straight."

"Good point. Yes, I'll do that."

So, Trist went out, giving a wink to the driver, and in a few moments Mr. Rushkin appeared.

"Driver, do you know where the — Bank is?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, drive me straight there."

"Yes, sir."

Trist had already got in, and now the old man did the same, but before he had closed the door a man came running up.

He caught hold of Rushkin by the arm, telling the driver to hold on, and in a loud voice, with something of a country twang to it, demanded:

"Sam Rushkin, have you seen Sary Sweetapple?"

The man was an honest-looking farmer, judged by his appearance, a man about fifty-five years old, with a slouch hat and a coat a size too big for him, and a fringe of whiskers around his face.

Before answer could be made a younger man joined him, a rather good-looking young countryman, with a light mustache and clear blue eyes, looking a little more spruce than the other, but by their resemblance it was easy to guess that they were father and son.

"Joe Skinner!" exclaimed Rushkin.

"Yes, it's me. Have you seen her? Answer up quick."

"I am glad you have come, Joe," and Rushkin gave his hand. "I want your aid just now."

"Yes, but have you seen Sary?"

"I have. She reached my house during the night, and when I found she had run away you can believe that I gave her a talking to. I threatened to send her right back to you, and this morning she was missing!"

Train-boy Trist was amazed at such talk as this.

"You mean that she has run away?"

"That is just it."

"See here, Sam Rushkin, are you talkin' me fair?"

"I am telling you the truth just as it is, Joe Skinner, and you can believe it or not, just as you please."

"And what is goin' to be done about it?"

"Have you notified the police?" asked the younger man.

"Not yet; but I am going to do so soon as I get back from this business I have on hand."

"Is it somethin' more important than findin' Sary Sweetapple?" demanded the older of the two men. "Is there anything more important than that, I would like to know?"

"Maybe not, to you, but I have other business as well. You just stay here till I return, and then we'll put our heads together and see what is going to be done. Ho! Harry?" calling to a young man who stood in the door of the store. "Give these gentlemen chairs till I return. I am going to the bank to draw some money, and then I have a little matter of business to attend to. I'll be back in about half an hour, I guess. Go on, driver."

CHAPTER XVI.

DOING A DOUBLE DEAL.

WITH that, Rushkin shut the door of the carriage and the driver started.

Train-boy Trist looked back through the rear window, and saw the two men staring after the vehicle wonderingly.

The next moment they turned and entered the store, and Trist looked for the cab, to see if that was following, and it was, at about the same distance.

Trist's mind was busy, for he knew not what to make of what he had just heard. He connected it with the strange request Rushkin had made of him at the time of the girl's rescue.

"Have they gone in?" Rushkin asked.

"Yes, sir, they have gone into the store."

"That is good. No doubt you thought strange of what I said to them, after the tone of that letter you found last night."

"Well, yes, rather, that's so. If you helped the young woman to run away from them, why should you want to scold her and threaten to send her back, and so make her run away from you?"

"Don't you see the point, young man? You are a pretty bright chap, and you ought to see through it."

"Yes, but I don't, unless you are lying to them."

"Ha, ha! Well, that is it."

"Then I begin to see through it. You are really hiding the girl, but you want them to think she has run away."

"That is it. Mind, I trust you to say nothing."

"Oh! you can trust me. I am on the side of right, every time, you bet."

"That is the way to be. It pays in the long run. They are only after her fortune, that's all."

Trist picked these things over in his mind, though, as they rode along, and there rose up a great big doubt as to which was the honest party.

It struck him that there was just about an even chance that Rushkin was working a similar scheme in his own interests, and that this was one reason why he was so interested in the girl.

To Trist's mind, the Skinners, father and son, did not look like a bad pair, even if their name was somewhat against them, for it cast the reflection that they might be "skinnners" by nature, too. He made up his mind that he would know more about the matter.

When they reached the bank, Rushkin got out and entered.

The cab came up the next moment, on the opposite side of the coach, and stopped there, close by the door.

The crook put out his head and motioned to Trist.

Trist opened the door on that side, slightly.

"Is it all right?" Gorman asked.

"Yes, it's all hunk."

"And he has come here for the money?"

"You bet!"

"All right; steer him straight, and we'll come out on top with the game."

"He is biting hard," declared Trist. "and it won't be much trouble to land him."

He closed the door, and when Gorman had spoken to the driver, in lower tone, the cab went on.

Some minutes later Rushkin came out of the bank, carrying a packet wrapped in news-

paper, and hurriedly got into the carriage, which immediately drove on.

"You can see it is a scheme," said Trist. "The driver don't have to be directed now."

"We'll scheme them," declared Rushkin. "The bank detective, with another man with him, will be at the house as soon as we are, and they will ask for Gorman and come right in."

"That is good, but we must make sure of a sight of the papers the very first thing."

"I'll manage that, I think."

After that they were for the most part silent till they came to their final destination.

There they got out, Rushkin bade the driver wait for him, and without looking in any direction he and Trist mounted the steps and rung the bell.

The servant, if such she was, having been given her instructions, directed Trist to lead the gentleman right up to Mr. Gorman's room, saying he would be in in a few moments.

This Trist did, Rushkin willingly following, as if he suspected nothing.

The door of the room was open, and they entered and sat down.

They had not long to wait, when Gorman came in.

He looked at Trist, who was seated in a big chair in a lazy fashion, and who said:

"This is the gentleman, sir, and he has got the goods with him, as you see. But, let him speak for himself; I'm too fresh, I guess."

But, Trist gave a wink, indicating the newspaper packet the old man had under his arm as being the money which had just been taken out of the bank for the purpose of making the transaction.

"Yes, sir, I am here on business," said Rushkin. "If you have got what I want, hand it right over and take the money. No questions asked. It's a pretty stiff price, but I must have those papers."

"Then you have brought the amount?"

"Yes; just taken out of the bank. Show me the papers."

"They are right here, sir," and the man turned and raised his hand toward a shelf.

At that instant, though, there came a ring at the bell, and, at the same time, a shrill whistle was heard in the street.

Gorman's hand dropped, and he turned pale, for the instant undecided what to do, as it seemed. The whistle was a warning from his pal without.

With a quick motion the fellow snatched the newspaper packet from under the old man's arm, and darted through a door into an adjoining apartment, Rushkin after him.

Train-boy Trist sprang for the shelf toward which Gorman had reached only the instant before, and in another instant his hand came in contact with a small pocket-book. In a second it was in Trist's pocket.

"This is all right, anyhow," he said to himself. "I'll wait, now, until they prove up, and then I'll know who has the best right to 'em. Not likely either of 'em has a better right than the girl herself," and taking his pistol from his pocket he followed Rushkin.

He found the old gentleman at the end of the adjoining hall, trying in vain to open a door that was fastened on the other side.

"Did he get away?" Trist asked.

"Yes, curse him, he has got clear off and away!"

"And he took your money with him?"

This put the old fellow in a better humor.

"Ha, ha!" he laughed. "He is welcome to that; that was a pretty good trick. Nothing but paper!"

"Well, if he left the other papers behind we are all right. We'll make a search of the room, and maybe we'll find them. I am afraid, though, that he has 'em in his pocket."

"No, I think not, for he was going to take something from a shelf."

"Ha! so he was."

They returned to the other room, where two men were ready to meet them, the one the bank detective.

"He escaped you?" that worthy asked.

"Yes, he got away," growled Rushkin.

"And took your money?"

"Ha, ha! Yes, he took that!"

"Then you see I was right, about suggesting that you should carry such a package."

"Sure enough, so you were. But, I was not such a fool as to bring the real goods here. Now, we want to search this room for the papers, and that shelf in particular."

The search was made, but no papers were found.

"Never mind," said Train-boy Trist, "I am in this race yet, and I'll have 'em or bust. I am going to have that fellow before I give up, you bet!"

"I don't see how you can do it now," complained Rushkin.

"I haven't seen a thing ahead, I s'pose all the way?" was the bantering rejoinder.

"Well, if you get them there is a good, stiff reward awaiting you."

"All right; I'll remember that, sir. I am in to stay to the end, now, if I lose my job."

"Well, let's get back. Much obliged to you, gentlemen, for your trouble," to the bank detective and his aide. "The same offer of reward is open to you, if those papers can be recovered from that rascal."

CHAPTER XVII.

SPREADING THE NET.

THEY left the house immediately, the others following.

Mr. Rushkin looked to find the coach, forgetting for the moment the character of the driver who had brought them there, but neither coach nor cab was to be seen anywhere.

"Might 'a' known it, if I had thought," said the old gentleman, with a light laugh.

"You can bet they had business elsewhere," averred Trist. "But, the cars are not far away, and we'll get there all the same."

They made haste to the nearest cars that ran in the direction in which they desired to go, and in due time were again in the neighborhood of their starting point.

Leaving the car, they walked on toward the store, but, before they reached there, they were met by Jack Minnie, who stopped Rushkin.

"Well, I see the jays have arrived," he remarked.

"Yes, they are here, and now I am going with them to report the case to the police."

"Good enough. I think I had better keep in the background, don't you? Just as well not to be seen in it, maybe."

"Yes, just as well. And, look out for—you know what."

"Certainly; trust me for that."

Minnie cast a sharp look at Trist.

"You are trusting this youngster?" he asked of Rushkin.

"Oh, yes; he has served me well, thus far, and will serve me still better."

In a few words, then, the old man gave an account of what had taken place, and Minnie was convinced.

"Bully for you, young man!" the latter exclaimed. "You help get those papers for the young lady, and you will have done a good thing for a persecuted young woman."

"You can count me in, you bet!" assured Trist. "But, say, Mr. Rushkin, there is no use my goin' home with you; I may as well get out and hustle and try to get on track of that crook again, don't you think so?"

"Well, I don't know but you are right."

"You can go to the police, you know, and report the missing young woman, with the Skinners, and at the same time you can tell what has taken place and put the police on track of the crook. And in the mean time maybe I will get on his shadow."

"That is right," spoke up Minnie. "You do just that, young fellow."

"And don't forget that you are working for a reward," added Rushkin. "You won't be forgot, when we get done."

"All right! Don't believe anybody would take me for a great detective, do you? I should reckon not. But, maybe I can stumble into some more fool luck for you."

With that Trist hurried away, and disappeared around the nearest corner.

On that corner happened to be a bake-shop, with a door on each street, and Trist entered this shop by the side street door.

"Give me a couple of buns, please," he said to one of the girls at the counter.

But, even as he asked, he had an eye out upon Rushkin and his companion, for Jack Minnie was his game just now.

The buns were forthcoming, and paying for them, Trist stopped just inside the front doors and began to munch one of them leisurely while he kept watch.

Rushkin and his companion talked earnestly for some minutes, and then parted, Rushkin continuing on his way and Minnie going up the avenue at an easy pace, with a look of satisfaction on his face.

Trist allowed him to gain a little distance, and then set forth to follow him to learn where he was going.

"Yes, sir," the young news detective said to himself, "I am in it, right up to my ears. And I smell somethin' like mice, now, too. I have got a corner on the papers, and if I can get a corner on the girl I will be all hunk. Then we'll see who is honest and who isn't."

"And I mustn't forget to corner that crook, too, while I am about it, for I have got to get square with him for that clip he gave John Lynch. Ha, ha! but I would like to have seen his face when he opened that newspaper and found the five thousand dollars! I'll bet he swore in a fashion to make a pirate look pea-green all over with envy. This is more fun'n I have had in a year."

Trist had now a suspicion against Rushkin.

He believed that he and Minnie, and not the Skinners, were the real foes of the young woman.

The whole thing, he decided, had been the pretty scheme of that pretty clique, and he meant to know which was right before he went much further in the game. The talk between Rushkin and Minnie was almost proof enough.

He shadowed his suspect with care.

Minnie went straight ahead, without any suspicion of being followed, and walked all the way to his destination.

Trist noted the street and the number, and pulling up his coat collar and pulling down his hat, walked past the house, taking a careful but necessarily brief survey of it.

What was his delight, to see at one of the upper windows Sarah Sweetapple herself!

She turned away, even while he was looking, and he knew that word had been carried to her of Jack Minnie's call, or at any rate that was what he thought.

"Now I am happy!" Trist exclaimed to himself. "If I don't spring the joker on them now it will be because I don't know how, that's all. Sarah, my dear, I am in the ring yet, you can bet your pet rooster at home!"

Trist now set forth straight for Police Headquarters, by the shortest and quickest route.

He had his plans all laid out, and needed only the help of the police in order to carry them forward in fine shape.

And that was not the best of it. He could play into the hands of the police in such a way that they would think they were doing it themselves. But, he cared nothing for that.

In due time he was at his destination.

"I want to see the mogul," he hurriedly announced.

There was a little parley, but Trist carried his point and was shown into the office of the chief.

"Well, who are you and what do you want?" he was asked.

"I'm Train-boy Trist, the news company's special, the game chicken that helped your men rescue that lost young lady last night," was the brief statement. "I have got somethin' a good deal bigger on hand now."

"What is it?"

"That young woman is lost again."

"Well, that is rather remarkable, isn't it, young man?"

"You'll say so, when you hear the tale I have to tell, I guess. You know all about last night's racket, of course."

"Yes."

"Well, there is a three-cornered game going on, now, and I'm one corner of the combination. I want you to take my corner and bring things out straight. See? I have got it all down fine for you."

"Let me hear your story."

So, Trist went ahead and rattled off the affair at length, telling all he knew and all that he suspected.

As he proceeded the interest of the police wakened up, and by the time the youth had done that interest was at highest pitch, and the chief exclaimed:

"Young man, you have done well! You have handled this case in a way that you may well feel proud of. No doubt these fellows will be here soon to report the matter to me, and then we'll see what we'll see."

"And may I stay here and see the fun?"

"Yes. When they are announced you may step right into that cabinet and take in all that is said. You may hear something that will be of further use to you."

The chief then called an officer, gave him some whispered instructions, and the man hastened away.

Trist spent the time looking around the rooms, and was especially interested in the Rogues' Gallery, the little museum of curios, etc.

In about half an hour Mr. Samuel Rushkin was announced, and the young detective made haste to get into the cabinet, from which he could see and hear all that was done and said.

Mr. Rushkin and Mr. Skinner and his son entered.

Rushkin told their story, in a plain and straightforward manner, and asked for police aid in recovering the lost papers and restoring the missing young lady to her rightful guardian, Mr. Skinner.

"I think very likely your case can be attended to, gentlemen," they were informed. "I think we can assist you both in the recovery of the papers and in the finding of the missing young woman."

CHAPTER XVIII.

EXPOSE AND ENDING.

THE official touched a bell.

It was promptly answered, and the attendant received some instructions in a low tone.

"Just remain a few minutes, gentlemen," the official invited, "and I think I will have news for you. I believe we shall be able to help you without much delay."

And he proceeded to entertain them in a clever manner while they waited.

They had not a great while to wait, when the attendant returned, saluted, and delivered a message to his chief.

"Tell them to come in," was the order.

The attendant withdrew, and in a few moments the door opened again.

This time a detective entered, bringing with him no other than Sarah Sweetapple herself, her face full of alarm.

At sight of her, Rushkin partly sprung to his feet, his face pale, and an exclamation escaped him; nothing of which escaped the eyes of the chief. He, however, pretended not to see.

The Skinners looked greatly relieved, especially the young man.

"You see, gentlemen, we have been able to serve you very promptly, in this instance," the chief remarked, proudly. "This is the right person, as I can see by your faces. Sit down, young woman, and do not feel anxious, you have nothing to fear, for here are your friends."

The young woman was abashed, and knew not what to say or how to act.

"And now for the papers," said the chief, further. "I have sent for them, and I think they ought to be here by this time. I will just look here in the cabinet and see if they have come up in the pneumatic tube. I think my man understands that I want them that way. And if they are here, then we can settle matters in a brief time, no doubt."

He stepped to the cabinet and opened the door a little, and Trist, having taken the cue, put the papers, or rather the pocketbook, into his hand.

"This is your pocketbook, young lady?" he asked, turning to Sarah.

"Yes, sir."

"Then the papers are no doubt still in it, if you had them there. Let us see about it." And, in the presence of the wondering visitors, he proceeded to examine the contents of the purse.

The papers were there, sure enough!

"Now, there remains only one question to be settled," said the chief, and he looked at Skinner and Rushkin, "and that is, which of you is this young woman's true friend? And how are we going to come at the truth of the matter? Suppose both of you are after her wealth."

"I know plaguey well Sam Rushkin has been," cried Skinner, indignantly.

"It is false!" cried Rushkin. "It is you, you old sinner, wanting her to marry your son so that you could get at it."

"That is where you lie!" cried the younger man, leaping to his feet and shaking his fist at Rushkin. "I only wish there hadn't been any money in the matter at all!"

Train-boy Trist stepped out of the cabinet unseen.

"And what good do you suppose her money would do me?" demanded Rushkin. "I only wanted to save the young lady from your clutches, that is all. If she was a penniless orphan I'd like to know who would take her in the soonest, you or me? I guess she could starve, for all you would care."

"I have got the answer, sir," spoke Trist, in a loud voice.

He had given a sign to the chief.

They all turned and looked at him in astonishment, particularly Rushkin, who grew pale and looked uneasy.

"And what is the answer?" asked the chief, himself wondering what could be coming now.

"Why, they tell me that the young lady's entire fortune was lost in that last failure, and that there is not a cent of it left."

Sarah Sweetapple gave a slight scream and fainted; Rushkin turned pale as death; Skinner looked at him with a smile on his lips, while Skinner the younger sprung to the aid of the girl.

"I'm by-gosh glad of it!" he cried. "Now I can prove that I love her for herself. I didn't want her money."

"I agree with ye, boy," approved his

father. "What do you say, Sam Rushkin?"

"If there is all this soft love in the matter," that gentleman stammered, "I am going to wash my hands of the whole business. You can take her back with you, for all of me. And as for you—"

He shook his fist at Train-boy Trist.

"But, maybe the young lady will want to remain with you," Trist reminded. "I wouldn't go off in a hurry, if I was you."

"No, don't be in a hurry, sir," echoed the chief, rising, and laying a hand on his shoulder. "I am not done with you yet, quite. There is a little more to be explained here."

He touched the bell again.

A detective entered, bringing Jack Minnie, handcuffed.

At sight of him, in that plight, Rushkin dropped upon a chair, trembling.

"The little game is up, sir," said the chief. "You played it well, but you have been overreached, thanks to this young detective here," and he indicated Trist, who blushed with modesty.

Just then Sarah Sweetapple began to come to, and Tom Skinner was overheard in earnest addressing her.

"I love ye jest the same, Sary, even if your fortune has all gone up in smoke. I don't care a burnt tater fer your money; it was you I wanted. I love you, Sary, and I don't care if all New York knows it. You say the word, Sary, and we'll get married right away!"

He helped the young woman to sit up, and she covered her face with her hands and wept.

"I—I did it all in good faith," whined Rushkin. "The girl wrote to me that she was being urged to marry young Skinner, and that she was kept from having other company, and I helped her to come to New York."

"Yes, I know ye did," retorted Skinner. "You poisoned her mind, first, and then you laid a trap to get possession of her when she was about to come of age. If the truth could be got at, I bet you intended to cheat her, somehow. I have known you in the past, Sam Rushkin."

The old farmer was fearless, and he spoke with the indignation he felt.

"We'll see if we can't get a little nearer the bottom of it," said the chief. "You will be allowed the benefit of making a clean breast of this matter, Jack Minnie, and I think you can throw some light on it."

"You'll let me down easy if I do?"

"Yes."

"All right, then. It is all up, Rush, and it is every dog for himself, when it comes to the pinch. It was all so, chief, that the old man and me laid a scheme to get this young lady here to New York to get a slice of her fortune—"

"You lie! you lie!" cried Rushkin. "What is the use of your lying like that, just to get clear?"

"You old fool, do you think I would admit such a thing if it wasn't so?"

"But, it isn't so, and I can prove it isn't so. Just produce the letters I have written to the young lady, and see—"

"It was all a part of the scheme," asserted Minnie. "She was to be brought here; I was to court and marry her, then I was to pay Rushkin a certain sum for getting me the snap. See?"

"What did I say?" demanded Skinner. "Sary, I hope you can see who your true friends are, now."

"If you only can forgive me, you and Tom," the girl sobbed.

"It is plain who is to be believed in this case," spoke up the chief. "Your King Solomon act, young man," to Trist, "has solved that problem. Now that the young woman is penniless, her true friends are still true to her."

"I thought that would fetch it around," said Trist, grinning.

"We will stay here and try it in court, if you want that," suggested Skinner the elder.

"It won't be necessary," assumed the chief. "Young lady, are you willing to return home with your friends?"

"She is willin' to do more than that, sir," spoke up Tom Skinner, with a happy smile.

"She is willin' to marry me, here an' now!"

"All right; we'll have that done, if you say so. We can get hold of a minister in a few minutes, and that will be the right way to settle the difficulty, I guess."

And this was done. A minister was sent for, he came, and the pair were made man and wife.

When that had been done, then the chief announced that it was only a trick, the report that the young woman's fortune had been swept away.

They were then told of the good work Train boy Trist had been doing on the case; whereas Skinner gave him a handsome reward, then and there, and as they left the room the happy bridegroom urged him to come and see them some time.

That ended that part of the matter.

Rushkin was allowed to depart, after he had been lectured, and Jack Minnie was dismissed with a warning.

They were not seen or heard from again, by the Skinners, and it was not likely that they would attempt to carry their pretty scheme further, now that they had been shown up so well.

Trist then gave all his attention to the finding of Gorman, the crook.

He played the shadow over the house where the blackleg had last been seen, believing he would return there to get the pocketbook.

And, sure enough: that very night he came to the house, in a disguise, but Trist recognized him, and when he was coming away the young detective laid hold on him.

The Broadway Crook tried to give Trist a clip with his slug, but the special held fast to him, using his new revolver as a persuader, and the result was that the "blackleg in broadcloth" was run into the nearest police station and handed over.

He tried his best to get out of it, but Trist had too strong a case against him, and the gentleman crook finally got what he richly deserved.

Trist had accomplished his object in revenging the blow Jason Gorman had given the conductor, which had been the starting point of the whole matter, so far as the newsboy was concerned.

Young Skinner and his bride remained in New York for some days on their honeymoon, and Sarah found that she had made no mistake—that the old people had been her friends, after all, and had known best what was good for her. When she finally came into her fortune they were happy indeed.

Train-boy Trist returned to his duties immediately, and his excuse for absence was accepted. This was the third or fourth piece of detective work he had performed, and he now became the company's special in another sense. Whenever they have occasion for the services of a detective or shadower, Trist Finley is put on the case, and it is not often that he fails.

THE END.

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